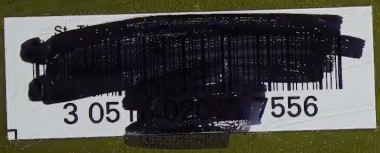
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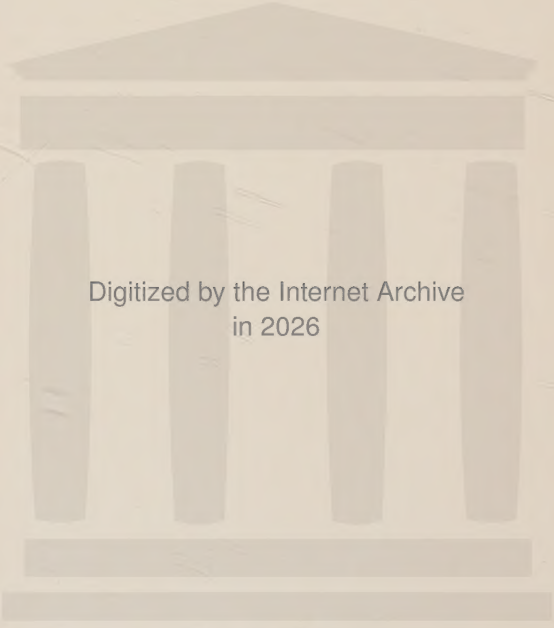

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HANDBOOKS

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

EDITED BY PROFESSOR HALES

THE AGE OF TRANSITION

VOL. II

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THE AGE OF TRANSITION

1400—1580

BY

F. J. SNELL, M.A.

AUTHOR OF 'THE AGE OF CHAUCER,' ETC.

VOL. II

THE DRAMATISTS AND PROSE WRITERS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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INTRODUCTION.

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* assumed its present shape in or about the year 1390; and the first three Books of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* were published in 1590, so that almost exactly two centuries separate these two great works. But Chaucer lived on to 1400, and Spenser had made himself a name some dozen years before the first part of his *magnum opus* was published; so that between the Epochs or Ages of these poets a period of less than two centuries—only 179 or, in round numbers, 180 years—intervenes. Yet when Spenser looked back across the space of five generations that lay between him and Chaucer, the figure of his famous predecessor stood out high and clear, unobstructed by any forms of like or comparable dimensions. Many forms were to be seen; but they were those of lesser though not insignificant men. The dominating presence of our literary past was undoubtedly Chaucer, and he had no rival, however considerable the merits of many who had flourished since his day and enjoyed a limited lordship, which is still conceded them. Thus for Spenser as he grew up there was no one whom he could call Master, no one to whom he could do obeisance as to his king and sovereign, except Chaucer; and at Chaucer's feet he was proud to sit and his songs to 'lere.' In Spenser, his contemporaries thought, and in spite of some carpings and some quite defensible criticisms, his countrymen have ever since his

time thought, that poetry had revived again—that a true prophet had once more been raised up. He was welcomed with acclamations, and at once placed on the throne that had been so long empty. Whatever his defects and failures, the Elizabethans and posterity recognized in him a supreme imaginative power, and that in him the highest poetic spirit that seemed to have passed away with Chaucer was re-incarnated and re-instated.

Chaucer closes a great period; Spenser begins one; and, as he begins it, confesses his reverence for the last great monarch of English song, and how it is from him that he has himself learnt to sing. Thus in the *Shepherd's Calendar* he tells 'a tale of truth'

> Which I conned of Tityrus in my youth,
> Keeping his sheep on the hills of Kent,

and his friend 'E. K.'—Edward Kirke—notes that by 'Tityrus I suppose he means Chaucer, whose praise for pleasant tales cannot die, so long as the memory of his name shall live and the name of Poetry shall endure.' Again, in the same poem, Spenser writes:

> The God of Shepherds, Tityrus, is dead,
> Who taught me homely, as I can, to make.
> He, whilst he livèd, was the sovereign head
> Of shepherds all that been with love ytake.
>
> Now dead he is, and lieth wrapt in lead,
> (O! why should Death on him such outrage show?)
> And all his passing skill with him is fled,
> The fame whereof doth daily greater grow.
> But, if on me some little drops would flow
> Of that the Spring was in his learned head,
> I soon would learn these woods to wail my woe,
> And teach the trees their trickling tears to shed.

And again:

The gentle shepherd sat beneath a spring,
All in the shadow of a bushy brere,
That Colin hight, which well could pipe and sing,
For he of Tityrus his songs did lere.

When at last he sends his 'little Calendar' into the world, he bids it

Dare not to match thy pipe with Tityrus his stile.

No pupil ever revered and loved his master more fondly than Spenser Chaucer. Their geniuses were profoundly and utterly different, as is seen signally when Spenser strangely essays to complete the story Chaucer has left 'half told':

The story of Cambuscan bold
Of Camball and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride.

Spenser never dreamed of a more impossible thing than that he could continue in a harmonious manner anything left unfinished by the poet so richly endowed with certain gifts, as of humour and of dramatization, which he himself so conspicuously lacked. As little, had their chronological relations been reversed, could Chaucer have gone on with the *Fairy Queen* in the Spenserian way; as little could Thackeray have written a chapter of *Pickwick*, or Tennyson a page of the *Ring and the Book*. Yet such impossibilities are quite consistent with fervent admiration. Dickens and Thackeray, Tennyson and Browning highly appreciated each other's work; but not one of them ever made the mistake of attempting his compeer's manner. Conceive Thackeray, had he been living, undertaking to complete *Edwin Drood*, or Dickens taking up and concluding *Denis*

Duval! But Spenser's passionate regard for the one great lord of literature whose work he knew was such, that, not without some misgiving and a humble apology it must be allowed, he ventured to take up the reins that had fallen abruptly from Chaucer's hands, and attempt to drive a Chaucerian team:

> Then pardon, O most sacred happy spirit,
> That I thy labours lost may thus revive,

[as if he fancied the Squire's Tale had once been written to the end, but the latter part had not been preserved.]

> And steal from thee the meed of thy due merit,
> That none durst ever whilst thou was alive;
> And being dead in vain yet many strive;
> Ne dare I like, but, through infusion sweet
> Of thine own spirit, which doth in me survive,

[a highly questionable assumption, to be soon very decidedly negatived]

> I follow here the footing of thy feet
> That with thy meaning so I may the rather meet.

All these quotations bring vividly before us the fact that to Spenser

> Dan Chaucer, well of English undefiled,
> On Fame's eternal beadroll worthy to be filed,

seemed the one regnant poet before him, and that the years which had passed since his death had produced no one of commanding eminence and distinction. So in a sense Chaucer was still reigning, or rather he was the last of the last dynasty of literature. He had left no heir, apparent or presumptive. Thus the land was kingless, and was so to remain till the advent of the very poet whose enthusiastic appreciation of Chaucer's greatness we have just illustrated.

It is this interregnum —this interval between Chaucer and Spenser—that the present work has for its subject-matter. It is a period of profound interest and importance, but not so much for the intrinsic and paramount excellence of its productions, (for

> 'a Muse of fire that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention'

inspired none of them, however real the charms and attractions of many) as for its being the age of transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, and reflecting in its literature this momentous movement, which affected life in every department and direction, completely transforming society in all its ways, habits, ideas. It was a period of ruin and reconstruction, of falling to rise, of dying to live, of perpetual decay and perpetual growth.

Now it is not to be expected that a great literature should flourish in a period of this description. *Inter arma silent leges*, says Cicero in one of his speeches. Certainly, *inter arma silent Musae*; and, if we use the term *arma* in the widest sense so as to include every variety of conflict, not only military and material but intellectual and spiritual, this adaptation of Cicero's saying is eminently applicable to long years of profound outer and inner revolution. Now and then we may hear some sweet voice singing all apart, but the song is short and is soon interrupted; that is to say, lyrical poetry is not altogether extinct. One can scarcely imagine its ever being so, whilst there is any life at all in the nation. So long as there is not utter stagnation and death, the lyrical cry must needs from time to time escape men's lips. But in ages of great disturbance and convulsion nothing more in the way of poetry is likely to be produced or can reasonably be listened for. No great epic has a chance of being conceived and created in the

midst of uproar and earthquake. Milton could undertake no such work amidst the clamour and confusion of the Civil troubles of his day. He longed for 'a still time, when there shall be no chiding.' He could not sing, however else he could use his voice, 'in these noises.'

The period that now concerns us has perhaps scarcely any parallel in English history in the multiplicity, the profundity, the effectiveness of the changes through which the country passed. There was indeed no solution of continuity; but the England of 1580 was wonderfully different from the England of 1400. What a contrast between the crushed Lollardry of the earlier era and the triumphant Protestantism of the later. In the year 1408 Wycliffe's translations of the Bible were directly condemned as unauthorized[1] and inaccurate. Less than a century and a half later the Bible in English was set forth with the King's most gracious licence; and shortly afterwards an injunction issued by the King's authority, required the clergy to provide in each parish 'one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English,' the expense to be shared by the priest and the parishioners. The Bible was to be set up in some convenient place within the church, and the clergy were directed to 'expressly provoke, stir and exhort every person to read the same.' The removal of obstructions to the free access to the Bible was an event of far more than

[1] The attempt recently made to disattach from Wycliffe and his followers the translations so long known as the Wycliffite seems to us a complete failure. We have not time here to discuss the question. We will only say that we rejoice it should have been raised and thoroughly examined. The final result is undoubtedly to make clearer than ever how great was the service done by Wycliffe, Hereford and Purvey in making the Bible accessible to all readers, and so acquainting them directly with the primary documents of Christianity, that they might judge for themselves of the relation of 'the Scriptures' to the current Sacerdotalism.

ecclesiastical importance. It was a part of an immense movement for the enfranchising of the human spirit, not yet perhaps completely effected, but which then made memorable progress.

Briefly, the period now under our survey was one of perpetual agitation and change in several essential respects. Now and then the repressive and conservative forces may seem to have prevailed. Some old tyranny or another may seem for a time to have succeeded in holding its own against the rising tide of inquiry and independence; it may seem to have proclaimed with authority not to be denied, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no further,' or even 'Thus far thou shalt not go, but backward thou shalt go to thy old-time frontiers.' But on the whole, whatever occasional misadventures and collapses there may have been, or seem to have been, in the earnest revolt against long established bondages, the march forward went steadily on; and at last we find ourselves in a new era—an era strangely contrasting with the medieval. Certainly one cannot say that the change was an unmixed good; what change ever is so? What past centuries are there that had no virtues and excellences?—at whose funerals no tear was shed, even by those who welcomed most heartily the coming age? But we may confidently say that the change was in the main unutterably good, whatever irresistible admixture or taint of evil may have stained its perfection and qualified its beneficence.

How infinitely unquiet and turbid the times were we may vividly assure ourselves by merely recalling the well-known facts that in them took place the loss of our French possessions, the Wars of the Roses, the death of Feudalism, the consolidation of the kingdoms of Western Europe, the application of gunpowder to warlike purposes, the capture of Constantinople by 'the unspeakable Turk,' the inven-

tion of the Printing Press, the rise of the New Learning and 'the Oxford Reformers,' the Reformation, the discovery of the New World and the exploration of little known parts of the Old. Each one of these events, or series of events, might well have a volume devoted wholly to it. Certainly what is called 'the Renaissance' has as yet not received adequate literary treatment. It is indeed an enormous subject; and if, as is well urged, the results of it are not even yet finished and consummated, an adequate literary treatment cannot, of course, yet be expected. But to look only at those other events recapitulated—who could easily exaggerate their importance, their power of transforming Church and State, and life in all its shapes and aspects? To name any one of them is to suggest a vast metamorphosis, political or social or ecclesiastical or material or intellectual.

Clearly, one cannot reasonably expect a high artistic literature from a period so utterly engrossed in such a strange variety of far-reaching dissolutions and recoveries, Its ideas were all in a state of unsettlement and uncertainty. It was reluctant to let go its hold on the past, which after all had done so much for it; and the face of the future it could not distinctly see, whether it was to bless or to curse. Naturally, it clung to the good it seemed to have, and had some misgivings as to what would come in its place. But, whatever its perplexities and fears, the great world rolled on its appointed course; and God 'fulfilled himself' in a new way—one of His 'divers ways and manners.'

No doubt this period was very imperfectly, or scarcely at all, conscious of the illimitable changes through which it was passing. It had no definite perception of what was going away, and what was coming—one day as it went by seemed like another. The barons, who were hewing each

other to pieces on the York-and-Lancaster battle-fields, never thought but their houses would endure for ever. The teachers in their schools never imagined that the *quadrivium* and the *trivium* would soon cease to satisfy all the requirements of higher education. No one dreamt of the revolution to be brought about by the vagrant Greek scholars who were fleeing from falling Constantinople. Our expulsion from France, where indeed we had no business to be, afflicted England with deep shame and disgust; but who ever calculated the consequences, social and national, of what at the time stirred such hot indignation? The act *De Haeretico comburendo* seemed to have answered its narrow-minded purpose; but what was the ultimate fruit of it and of all such nefarious processes?

> 'Full oft 'tis seen
> Our means secure us, and our mere defects
> Prove our commodities.'

That is, men and sects make themselves safe, as they think, by the very enactments that finally undermine and ruin them—that make them detestable and infamous. Who had any vision of the new England that was to spring out of the ruins of the old? Who that felt the thick darkness of the time, if any one did, had any anticipation or hope of the bright Elizabethan dawn that was in course of time to follow—not a fleckless or cloudless dawn perhaps, but a splendid exchange for the Marian horrors and the many grievous troubles that had preceded them?

The old system of things was waxing old as a garment. As a vesture it was being changed, and changed for ever—changed for good. But few men, or none, had eyes to perceive how the robes still in fashion were becoming threadbare and torn, a mere 'loop'd and window'd raggedness,' wholly unfit to defend their wearers from the seasons that

were at hand. *Sartor* now, if ever, needed to be *resartus;* the world, if ever, needed a new suit of clothes, though it it was not aware of the nakedness and destitution that threatened it, and thought it might still make the old tatters serve as a covering, by darning and patching and piecing.

Those who were most serviceable in helping to provide the new clothes, that were so sorely needed, showed often the least apprehension of what they were about. Caxton, for instance, had no idea whatever that he was ushering in a new age. 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.' Many great ameliorations of life come in unnoticed and unsung. The famous printer was an earnest admirer of the age of chivalry and all its habits and customs. It was one of his chief objects to perpetuate that age—to impart vigour to its fainting energies and to recall the days of its glory. He had no inkling that its sun was setting to rise no more. He saw what he thought was a temporary languor, to be overcome by will and resolution. In his *Book of the Order of Chivalry,* printed in or about 1484, he fervently appeals to his knightly contemporaries to rouse themselves, and revive their ancient discipline and fame:

'Oh, ye Knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry that was used in those days [the days of the heroes of the old Romances]? What do ye now but go to the baynes [baths], and play at dice? And some, not well advised, use not honest and good rule, against all order of knighthood. Leave this, leave it! and read the noble volumes of St. Graal, of Lancelot, of Galaad, of Tristram, of Perse Forest, of Percival, of Gawain, and many more; there shall ye see manhood, courtesy, and gentleness. And look in latter days of the noble acts sith the Conquest, as in King Richard's days Cœur de Léon, Edward I. and III. and his noble sons, Sir Robert Knolles, Sir John Hawkwood, Sir John Chandos, Sir Gualter

Manny. Read Froissart; and also behold that victorious and noble King Henry V. and the captains under him, his noble brethren, the earls of Salisbury, Montagu, and many other, whose names shine gloriously by their vertuous noblesse and acts that they did in the honour of the order of chivalry. Alas! what do ye but sleep and take ease, and are all disordered from chivalry? How many knights be there now in England that have the use and the exercise of a knight? that is to wit, that he knoweth his horse and his horse him; that is to say, he being ready at a point to have all things that belongeth to a knight, an horse that is according and broken after his hand, his armour and harness suit, and so forth *et cetera*. I suppose an a due search should be made, there should be many founden that lack; the more pity is! I would it pleased our sovereign Lord that twice or thrice a year, or at the least once, he would cry jousts of peace, to the end that every knight should have horse and harness, and also the use and craft of a knight, and also to tourney one against one, or two against two; and the best to have a prize, a diamond, or a jewel, such as should please the prince. This should cause gentlemen to resort to the ancient customs of chivalry to great form and renown; and also to be always ready to serve their prince when he shall call them, or have need.'

Yet Caxton, for all his adjurations in favour of a social order that was vanishing, was doing more than anybody else to bring in a new and quite different culture. The result of the printing press was, so to speak, to relay the bases of society. It was to destroy the exclusiveness that was the baneful characteristic of the old knighthood. It was to extend the sense of brotherhood, and so to diminish and suppress the privileges of a class often insolent and overweening in its self-importance. It was to give scholarship and learning a new and a worthier place in the estimation of men. In fact, of chivalry in the old mediaeval sense as an oligarchic body, who but Caxton hastened the decease; who but Caxton rang the knell?

Not that anything Caxton could have done or abstained from doing, could have kept alive the order of chivalry, as he conceived it. When he was working in his 'chapel' at Westminster, full of enthusiasm as to his imported invention, but without the faintest dream of what it was to accomplish in the future, chivalry, as he knew it, was quickly and irrevocably passing away. It lay sick and swooning and dying:

> 'All his face was white
> And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
> Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
> And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
> Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls,
> That made his forehead like a rising sun
> High from his daïs-throne, were parch'd with dust;
> Or clotted into points and hanging loose
> Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
> So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
> Not like that Arthur, who, with lance in rest,
> From spur to plume a star of tournament,
> Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
> Before the eyes of ladies and of Kings.'

The characteristic conservatism of the human and of the English race unquestionably retarded the development of all the various changes we have mentioned. Caxton was indeed a typical Englishman. We were slow to abandon our old idols and leave their shrines unfrequented. Certainly it is not well to be too hasty in burning what was adored and in adoring what was burnt. And no such mistake was made in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Very slowly were new temples erected, and crowded with worshippers who were finally dissatisfied with the old ritual. How slowly, to lay aside metaphor, changes were made is excellently illustrated by the history

of certain innovations in our military equipment—by the history of fire-arms:

> More than two centuries elapsed, [writes Richard Brooke in his well-informed paper on *The General Use of Fire-arms by the English in the Fifteenth Century*,] after the common application of gunpowder to warlike purposes in Europe, before the English and other European nations entirely relinquished the use of bows and arrows, and in lieu of them but by slow degrees adopted the use of fire-arms.
>
> *Archery for the purposes of war had not been altogether abandoned in this country, even at the breaking out of the Civil War in the reign of Charles I.* [The italics are ours.]
>
> It has been correctly remarked by Mr. Grose in his *Military Antiquities* that there is amongst old soldiers a great dislike to innovations, because, by adopting new weapons and consequently a new exercise, the old and expert soldiers find themselves in a worse state than new recruits, as they have not only a new exercise to learn, but also the old one to forget.
>
> Indeed, as late as the year 1557, so evenly did the public opinion run between the comparative efficiency of the old and new systems, that in that year by an Act of Parliament (of the 4th and 5th of Philip and Mary) respecting the providing of armour and weapons, various persons in Wales, Lancashire and Cheshire were required to provide and keep a haquebut [a kind of primitive musket]; or in lieu of one, the alternative was given to each of them to keep a long bow and sheaf of arrows.

Thus the more this period is scrutinized, the more evident is its transitional character. To be sure, every period is more or less so; stability and stationariness belong absolutely to none. But they belong to some periods in a much less degree than to others, and to few, if any, do they belong in a less degree than to the one that we are now surveying.

It would be highly interesting, if it were now convenient, to consider particularly the educational movement

that took place in it—the changes both in places and in subjects of education. Erasmus and Rabelais, not to mention many others, were epoch-makers in the scholastic world. At all events, whatever their influence, they represented the prevailing discontent with the old methods and matters of instruction. The claustral schools and such institutions had in their day been much valued and highly beneficial, and what is owed to them must never be forgotten; but their day was over. New seminaries—schools, colleges, universities—were being founded that had no connection with the monasteries or with monastic notions. The greed of certain persons who 'feathered their own nests,' while acting under the often-abused name of 'the Reformation,'—which assuredly hid a multitude of sins and sinners if it also included the best and sincerest and most enlightened spirits of the time and those who did excellent service both for God and man,—miserably limited the number of those new foundations or re-foundations; but yet the number of them is remarkable, and a new educational *régime* was gradually established, not to be seriously disturbed or upset till our own time, when once again a radical reconsideration of the subject seems imminent, or has already commenced.

No wonder, then, if in ages of such many-sided and profound mutation—ages when seemingly chaos was come again, and a new cosmos had yet to emerge out of what appeared superficially to be mere confusion and anarchy, old things withering away and new things not yet in blossom—literature did not greatly flourish. The passage from Mediaevalism to Modernism could not but be tempestuous. To break with the past—this must needs be an agony, however fair and alluring the future as it presents itself to us. The past had great distinctions which had made it dear to men's memories, and its associations

were not easy to sever. Who could be sure that the future would be better than the past? Many timorous souls felt far from sure, and they clung to the skirts of the departing age as if they could bring it back, having little faith in the aspirations and the endeavours of those who, while they recognized what the past had done for them, saw clearly that its power for good was exhausted, and while they speeded the parting guest, welcomed the coming with all their hearts and all their understanding.

No wonder, we say, if in such an age of tumult and turmoil, in the midst of wars, civil and intellectual and spiritual, there should be written no great books such as are conceived in a far other atmosphere,—conceived when poets have in a certain sense made up their minds about things, or are content not to make them up—when, at all events, they can stand apart from fierce and acrid controversies and struggles, and, not failing in their duty as citizens, can yet enjoy the calm and peace and quiet that gives their imagination freedom to disport itself after its manner, and to translate its visions into immortal verse.

One other thing must be mentioned, viz., that our language, too, was in this period in a state of unsettlement and transition. It was, in fact, passing along the last stage of its development from Middle to Modern English—going through its last process of disinflection and dis-archaising. There is little difference between the grammar of Surrey and of Tennyson; but how much between the grammar of Surrey and Chaucer! Probably enough, Chaucer's grammar is to a certain extent artificial and scholarly; evidently he took great pains to be accurate in this respect, and his flexional usage, as also that of Gower, is much more uniform and exact than was common at the close of the fourteenth century. At all events, his successors were ill able to appreciate or follow it; and the grammatical con-

fusion prevalent after his death is one of the things that make the metres of the fifteenth century so difficult to read metrically. Everyone, it would seem, did that which was right in his own eyes, and, so far as verse is concerned, we might seem to be in a tower of Babel, each writer arranging his own accents, selecting his own forms, singing his own tune. And not only in respect of its accidence but its vocabulary, there was much diversity and indecision. There was not yet any uniform standard of speech.

Caxton speaks of 'some gentlemen which late blamed me, saying, that in my translations I had over curious terms, which could not be understood of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations. And fain would I satisfy every man; and so to do took an old book and read therein; and certainly the English was so rude and broad that I could not well understand it. And also my Lord Abbot of Westminster did show to me late certain evidences written in old English for to reduce it into our English now used, and certainly it was written in such wise that it was more like to Dutch than English; I could not reduce nor bring it to be understood. And certainly our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born; for we Englishmen be born under the domination of the moon,[1] which is never steadfast but ever wavering, waxing one season, and waneth and decreaseth another season; and that common English that is spoken in one shire varieth from another.'

Then follows the well-known 'eyren' story; and the perplexed old printer resumes:

'Certainly it is hard to please every man by cause of diversity and change of language. For in these days every man that is in

[1] See Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Book XXI, chap. i, last paragraph: 'Alas, this is a great default of all Englishmen, for there may no thing please us no term,' etc.

any reputation in his country will alter his communication and matters in such manners and terms that few men shall understand them. And some honest and good clerks have been with me, and desired me to write the most curious terms that I could find. And thus between plain, rude, and curious I stand abashed; but in my judgment the common terms that be daily used be lighter to be understood than the old and ancient English.'

Again, in his *Life of Charles the Great*, he apologizes for the simplicity of his language:

'I have emprised and concluded in myself to reduce this said book into our English, as all along and plainly ye may read, hear, and see in this book here following, beseeching all them that shall find fault in the same to correct and amend it, and also to pardon me of the rude and simple reducing. And though so be there no gay terms nor subtle nor new eloquence, yet I hope that it shall be understood, and to that intent I have specially reduced it after the simple cunning that God hath lent to me, whereof I humbly and with all my heart thank Him, and also am bounden to pray for my father's and mother's souls, that in my youth set me to school, by which by the sufferance of God I get my living I hope truly. And that I may so do and continue, I beseech him to grant me of His grace; and so to labour and occupy myself virtuously, that I may come out of debt and deadly sin, that after this life I may come to His bliss in heaven.'

To quote the words of a most learned and distinguished historian, Mr. James Gairdner:

'The fifteenth century was not an age of really great men. Amid schisms in the church, wars, rebellions and disputed succession in every kingdom of Europe, it seems to have been impossible for any mind to realize to itself one grand idea, to work out one great work, or to set forth one great thought. The best minds of the age looked back upon the past, and regretted the chivalry that was passing away. Order was the one great need of the

time, and as yet men could see no order except of a kind already past recovering, which they were vainly endeavouring to restore. So for the peace of the church they burned heretics, and put witches to open penance, while they plunged Europe into war and anarchy.'

Mr. Gairdner in his following paragraphs recognizes some signs of the coming resurrection. But he states frankly enough that for the time being 'we had very little literature that deserved the name'—that there was as great a dearth of literary genius as political. A great, a magnificent time was to come; but it was not yet. 'The winter of our discontent' was to be succeeded by a 'glorious summer'; but for some generations winter was to have its course—its necessary and unavoidable course. The old vegetation was to die out, and new seeds were to produce new and yet more splendid fruit. It is a fact, as we have seen, that no poet of the first rank arose between Chaucer and Spenser, and the explanation of this fact is now obvious. The genesis of genius is an unsolved, and probably an insoluble, mystery, but the conditions of its growth and maturing—these we are able to explore; and it seems clear that the period of the *débâcle* of mediaevalism in England offered no conditions favourable to its florescence. No great poet could arise, or at least reach his full height, in such an era of dissolution and death, ere the life that was to follow was fully shaped and manifested.

But, if there was no poetry of the highest order, it was the seed time of the greatest poetry England has yet produced; and, moreover, it has belonging to it much poetry, which, if not of the highest order, is yet of great value and beauty, and whose loss would leave a lamentable blank in our literature. To point out with sympathy and with judgment the merits of these intermediate writers is the object of the volumes now submitted to the student; and

it will be found their merits are far from inconsiderable. They have a high interest of their own, besides being successors and the antecessors of our greatest poets. Many of the most charming works that have come down to us from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are anonymous—a fact in itself significant of the character of the period. We do not know by name the author of any one of our best ballads, and these are in their kind of incomparable worth and power. They are the poetic glory of the inter-Chaucer-and-Spenser period. They have come down to us often in a torn and tattered form, spoilt and corrupted versions of what they were originally. Yet how marvellous their loveliness and force, for all the rags that now disfigure them. This, at all events, is indisputable, that, though no supreme poetic work appeared, the poetic spirit was not dead. Ever and anon the lyrical cry is heard above the uproar of the fallings and crashings of ancient fabrics, in which men had flattered themselves they were to live for ever. To this day we listen with joyous wonder to certain sweet songs first sung in what is commonly thought one of the dolefullest and dreariest centuries of English history:

> 'O listen! for the vale profound
> Is overflowing with the sound.
> No nightingale did ever chant
> More welcome notes to weary bands
> Of travellers in some shady haunt
> Among Arabian sands.
> A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
> In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides.'

In all English Literature there are few things more beautiful than *The Nut-brown Maid*, and it was apparently composed in the reign of King Henry VII. Who

would look for such a flower in that arid epoch? Yet there it is to be found, happily not blushing 'unseen' and wasting 'its sweetness on the desert air,' but exquisite and fragrant for ever. If a woman wrote it—and there is much plausibility in the conjecture—she was certainly one of the greatest poetesses, if not the greatest, of whom England can boast. It is a splendid, passionate protest against the miserable calumny that women are incapable of steadfast faith—are as frail as they are fair—are all 'false, fleeting, perjured'—that however admirable men may be as models of constancy, women are hopelessly and scandalously fickle and untrue. Here is a nut-brown maid who can say and can prove that

'In my mind
Of all mankind
I love but you alone.'

Terrible are the trials and hardships, and even insults, with which she is threatened, but in vain—she is unmoved in her whole-hearted devotion, and her refrain knows no variation:

'For in my mind
Of all mankind
I love but you alone.'

She is indifferent to the censoriousness of the harsh, heartless world:

'Though it be sung
Of old and young
That I should be to blame,
Theirs be the charge
That speak so large
In hurting of my name;
For I will prove
That faithful love
It is devoid of shame.

In your distress
And heaviness
  To part [share] with you the same,
To show all to
That do not so
  True lovers are they none;
For in my mind
Of all mankind
  I love but you alone.'

The feeling and the expression have a perfect correspondence. *The Nut-brown Maid* is one of the most precious jewels of English lyric poetry.

For the dramatic and the epic poetry of the period there is little to be said. The day of the drama had not yet dawned. That form of the literary art was only in its infancy in the fifteenth century; and the sixteenth was far advanced before tragedy and comedy reached their adolescence and full manhood. The works that can charitably be assigned to the epic department are all of an inferior quality. There was, we think, only one man of the period we are considering that deserves to be credited with any epic capacity; and he was a prose-writer! We mean Sir Thomas Malory, the author of the *Morte d'Arthur*. He had many great gifts, but he lacked the one thing needful —the gift of poetic form. The *Morte d'Arthur* is a masterpiece of redaction and arrangement. It was no ordinary person that brought into one great whole all the various Arthurian stories, selecting, abridging, omitting. This was an achievement of high art. We have here a vast epic in prose, or in other words all the materials for a great poetic Arthuriad. But the fire that touched Isaiah's lips never descended upon Malory. No doubt conditions and circumstances were against him. It would seem probable that he compiled at least a part of his great collection in prison;

and all of it must have been written in the midst of dire political trouble and confusion. His industry and his judgment are marvellous, and so is his never-failing enthusiasm. The charm of his style gives his work, and will ever give it, a wide acceptance. It remains the most delightful version of the Arthurian legends; and we think it will be esteemed and read long after many other versions, largely founded upon it, have ceased to be esteemed and read. One may confidently predict that Malory will outlive Tennyson as a teller of the Arthurian tale. If any one of the *Idylls of the King* lives on, we think it will be the one that is most directly and fully taken from Malory—that known in its latest issue, with some inferior additions, as the *Passing of Arthur*. Had the endowment of that undefinable thing, the poetic touch, been added to Malory's other epical faculties, he would have produced the supreme Arthurian poem; but neither did time or place then 'adhere,' and he could not 'make' them. In the midst of an age of prose—for an age of prose it was, whatever lyrical flashes might at times enlighten and glorify it—he did all that a man could do, being so limited both by nature and by environment. He gave the world an imperishable epic in prose, as we have already termed it, for which the world—the English world, at least—grows more and more grateful 'with the process of the suns.' There cannot be one of his readers who hears unmoved his parting words, with the rhyming triplet that concludes them—his nearest approach to versification:

I pray you all, gentlemen and gentlewomen that read this book of Arthur and his knights from the beginning to the ending, pray for me while I am on live that God send me good deliverance [perhaps already he saw or thought he saw, the scaffold awaiting him; he was specially exempted from a pardon issued by Edward IV. in Aug., 1468], and when I am

dead, I pray you all pray for my soul; for this book was ended in the ninth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth

by Sir Thomas Mallore knight,
as Jesu helped him for his great might
as he is the servant of Jesu both day and night.

Requiescat in pace. So let all of us say in answer to his desire—we to whom he has bequeathed so priceless a legacy.

P.S.—I beg to thank my friends Mr. Snell and Professors Skeat and Herford for valuable criticisms of this introduction, but it must be clearly understood that they are not responsible for any of its shortcomings.

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THE AGE OF TRANSITION.

THE DRAMATISTS

CHAPTER I.

MORALITY PLAYS AND INTERLUDES.

Miracle and Morality Plays.

In his *English Writers*, (vol. ii, p. 173), a work of which we desire to speak with all respect for its collection of facts, if not for its judgement, Professor Morley remarks, 'the morality play did not arise by direct transition from the miracle play to the true drama.' From the very nature of the case the statement must strike one as suspicious, and we shall have no difficulty in showing that it is, in fact, erroneous. The earliest specimen of the class Morley considers to be one a fragment of which was discovered at the Irish Record Office, and which, from internal evidence, must be adjudged to some date between 1407 and 1462. It may be, as he points out, that this play is interesting inasmuch as it comprises the essence of all similar dramas, but its importance with respect to the development of the morality and its relations with the miracle play, is of the slightest. These points, however, cannot be neglected, since it is demonstrable that the morality did not come into existence, like Athena, full grown and fully armed, or merely

as a dramatic embodiment of the allegorizing spirit which had taken possession of English and Scottish court poetry, but was formed by a gradual and perfectly natural process of generation, out of the only sort of theatrical representations which had so far gained a footing in the island.

Wyclif informs us in his treatise *De Officio Pastorali* that 'friars have taught in England the Paternoster in English tongue, as men see in the play of York.' This play, it is said, held up to scorn all sorts of vices, and to praise the virtues, and a special gild existed for maintaining it. There was also a creed play, performed every tenth year about Lammastide, and, like its fellow, very clearly a morality play. The circumstances reveal an intimate historical connection with the miracle plays, of which York was one of the principal centres, but more we cannot say, because both have perished.

Although, as a regular theatrical fashion, moralities came after miracle plays, we must not lose sight of the fact that allegory had been constantly employed, to a greater or less degree, since the twelfth century. The distinction between the two classes of dramatic composition may be roughly stated as follows: miracle plays represent biblical scenes and characters, whilst in moralities the *personae dramatis* are the abstract idea, man, and a number of qualities which in various ways affect his destiny. In the main this distinction holds, but it is open to sundry objections. For example, in the Coventry plays, as they have been handed down to us, are to be met the figures of Contemplation, Peace, Death, and Justice, exactly as in the moralities. So also the Digby play, *Mary Magdalen*, anticipates them with its good and bad angels, with its personification, Luxuria, and with the moral problems that occupy the leading character.

The oldest morality, in the strict sense of the word, is

the *Castle of Perseverance*, which dates from the latter half of the fifteenth century, and whose hero is Humanum Genus. This nebulous personage comes before us at the moment of birth, when, it must be allowed, he is wondrous wise and acutely sensible of his own helplessness. To remedy this want of experience, if remedy it may be called, he is provided with two advisers, a good and a bad angel, who apprise him of the contrary ways wherein he may walk. Unluckily the bad angel is not the only spiritual enemy with whom he has to wrestle. There is Mundus, there is Caro, and there is Belial, not to mention Stultitia, Voluptas, and the Seven Deadly Sins. Amidst such a number of evil companions or assailants, all conspiring his downfall, it is not surprising that Humanus Genus succumbs, though, happily for him, he is in the end reclaimed by Poenitentia, Confessio, and the chief virtues, through whose intercession he is granted after death a favourable sentence by his Maker.

The *Castle of Perseverance*.

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The unknown author of this play was unquestionably a churchman; the Latinity of the drama alone is sufficient indication of its clerical origin. But the writer is not blind to the corruptions of the church, and is independent enough to make the bad angel compare his Holiness the Pope to a fox preaching to the geese. The play is composed in elaborate stanzas, and a feature in the style is the free use of alliteration. Its performance took place in the afternoon 'on the green'; and as there were no fewer than thirty-six characters, it is reasonable to surmise that the actors supported two or three different parts. The drama runs to about three thousand five hundred lines—'nearly,' says Mr. Pollard, 'as many as all but the longest of Shakespeare's plays.' This, as he intimates, is tantamount to prolixity. Unfortunately there is no charm of language to compensate for this excessive length, and the merits of

the play consist very largely in its organic completeness, in the perfection of its comprehensive scheme. Regarded in this way, there is much to be said for the *Castle of Perseverance*. It is an attempt to show through the mechanism of the stage the complex troubles with which every human soul is beset in its passage through life, and the difficulty with which it eventually attains the haven of salvation. Temptation and warning, fighting and failure, are the warp and woof of the play, and distinguish it, even to the final scenes, in which Humanum Genus is borne off to hell by the bad angel, who carries him on his back, but rescued by Pax, with the assent of God, sitting on His throne.

Mind, Will, and Understanding.

Not nearly so good as the *Castle of Perseverance* is a companion play, christened by Collier *Mind, Will, and Understanding*, and rechristened by Dr. Furnivall *A Morality of the Wisdom that is Christ*. In this the heroine is Anima, or the Soul; and a curious psychological point of the play is the circumstance that Mind, Will, and Understanding, are, and profess themselves to be, the three parts of the Soul, yet possess distinct personalities, as fully as do the Five Wits or Senses, which last figure as so many virgins with kirtles, mantles, and chaplets, singing an anthem. This suggests an important consideration, which is that, to all appearance, the success of the play depended far less on its substance than on its accidents. What could be more exciting, for instance, than the entrance of Anima in her degradation, 'fouler than a fiend,' and with little devils escaping from under her skirts? Other scenic attractions included a procession in which the Five Senses led the van and were followed by Anima, Wisdom, Mind, Will, and Understanding, of whom the last three are described as being 'in white cloth of gold,' with other adornments. Moreover a set of six evil sprites in the train

of Mind have red beards and lions rampant on their crest. The particularity with which these details are noted proves that the dramatist concerned himself not a little about the manner in which his play was produced. If this did not make the fortune of the drama, its case was desperate, for there was nothing in either plot or dialogue to redeem it from utter insipidity.

Mankind.

Mankind, the last of the trio, is a decided improvement on the preceding. In this, as in the first, the fate of humanity hangs in the balance, and the opponents who seek to secure him are Mercy and Mischief. The latter is seconded by Nought, New Guise, and Nowadays—obviously different phases of vanity. Mankind treats their attacks with contempt, but when a more original tempter appears in the person of Titivillus, the hero gives way, confessing himself weary of both labour and prayer. He arrives within an ace of hanging himself. From this dreadful predicament he is delivered by his good friend, Mercy, who proves in very deed his salvation.

Of the three plays the two former represent the earliest type of morality; the last, though found in the same manuscript, is probably of later date, since it betrays affinities with the forms which this class of play was to assume in a more advanced stage of evolution.

Everyman.

From this group we turn to dramas preserved through the medium of print, of which *Everyman* is *facile princeps*. It cannot be claimed as altogether an English product, for, although Professor Ten Brink apparently regards it as native and original, we now know this view to be incorrect. It is really a translation of the Dutch *Elderlijk*. However, it became thoroughly domesticated in this country, as is shown by the fact that in the early part of the sixteenth century it was twice printed by Richard Pynson, and twice

by John Skot. Concerning the date of the composition we can only state with certainty that it must have been written before the close of the fifteenth century, but Ten Brink is in favour of so early a period as the reign of Edward IV. It is distinguished from the plays hitherto considered by the circumstance that it deals, not with man's life as a whole, but merely with its results. Death summons Everyman to his account, and in his extremity the hero learns, like the patriarch Job, how untrustworthy are the supports on which he has been wont to rely:

> All earthly thingës is but vanity,
> Beauty, strength and discretion do man forsake;
> Foolish friends and kinsmen that fair spake,
> All fleeth save Good Deeds, and that am I.

One might infer from the way Everyman casts himself on the mercy of God and Mary that he half suspects that Good Deeds will, with Knowledge, leave him in the lurch, but in the epilogue the Doctor makes an authoritative announcement that this is not so; that, when other helpers fail, Good Deeds will befriend every man.

It deserves to be noted that the ground idea of the play is derived from an old Buddhist fable, known in Christendom under the title of *Barlaam and Josaphat*. Possibly the source from which the dramatist immediately drew was that far-famed collection, the *Golden Legend*, but, whatever its origin, near or remote, the plot is made to subserve the interests of the church. Take, for instance, the following lines insisting on the dignity of the priesthood, and the efficacy of the sacraments:

> There is no emperor, king, duke, nor baron,
> That of God hath commission
> As hath the least priest in the world being,
> For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign

He beareth the keys, and thereof hath cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure.

Equally generous in scope, as appealing to every man, is the play inaccurately styled, 'A Proper New Interlude of the World and the Child, otherwise called Mundus et Infans,' printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1522. So far as the epithet 'new' has any right to its place, it must be justified on the score of revival, or the fuller publicity due to the patronage of the printer. Internal evidence, such as is supplied by superabundant alliteration and gasconade, points back to a much earlier time, and it is highly questionable whether anything of the sort can have been produced after the reign of Henry VII. The play is a sketch of human life in its successive stages, infancy, boyhood, youth, manhood, and old age, and the principal figure bears different names, whilst remaining always the same. Dalliance, Wanton, Love-Lust and Liking, Manhood and Repentance, are the five appellations borne by him, and supposed to illustrate the character of the five ages through which he is accompanied by the officious Mundus. To this mentor Manhood becomes heartily attached, and, when Conscience has almost effected his conversion, refuses to break with him, observing:

The *World and the Child.*

The world findeth me all thing,
And doth me great service.

The consequence is that his reclamation is delayed until old age.

Though sharing the defects of its class, notably as regards the slightness of the action, the *World and the Child* is yet a remarkable play. What more striking deliverance than that speech of Mundus, when Love-lust and Liking has passed the threshold of his majority, with its allusion to the Seven Kings, whom the Prince of this World holds,

as it were, in leash? These kings are the Seven Deadly Sins, the last being Lechery, a fashionable ruler, whom Manhood is encouraged to worship with all his might.

Reference has been made elsewhere to Skelton's *Magnificence* and Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*. These are too closely interwoven with the authors' literary personalities to be considered apart from them; and while the former may have been overrated on account of a reputation won in another and diverse field, the latter at any rate is the sublimation of the morality play, whose broad lines it retains.

Interludes.

Popular conceptions of the class are deduced not so much from the earlier or nobler specimens, as from the 'interludes,' which represent the later and degenerate type. A characteristic figure in these briefer and less elaborate productions is the Vice —a character entirely strange to the older dramas. Probably the reason for this innovation was a wish to vary the monotony, which, in this connection, could be easily accomplished by rendering vice not only odious, but ridiculous. In *The Devil is an Ass*, Ben Jonson mentions Fraud, Covetousness, and Old Iniquity, as taking the part of the Vice, but in many didactic interludes he is not to be distinguished from the domestic jester, in whose dress he perhaps made his appearance on the stage. Thus, in many instances, the Vice is absorbed by the Fool, who, in Heywood's *Play of the Weather* is one Merry Report, in *Jack Juggler* Jack himself, and in *Godly Queen Hester* Hardy Dardy. None of these individuals impersonates, specifically or otherwise, any of the deadly sins; they are, in fact, simply jesters, neither more nor less.

Consistently with the narrow limits to which the morality play was now confined, the themes dwindled from life in its entirety to mere aspects of life. Often it was employed as a means for fanning the flame of enthusiasm for learn-

ing; not seldom as an instrument for the propagation of theological beliefs in that era of disputation and reform. The best known of these moral interludes, as it is one of the earliest, is perhaps *Hickscorner*, which is a Catholic play. Here the Vices are Free Will and Imagination, with Hickscorner in a not very dissimilar *rôle*. Although his is the title-part, he only appears in the middle of the play, and then vanishes finally. Hickscorner is a traveller, who, joining himself to Free Will and Imagination, reports with much satisfaction that the good monks and nuns, Truth, Patience, Meekness, Humility, Soberness, Charity, Good Conscience, Devotion, and others, have gone down in a ship that has foundered on a quicksand. Then the three dissolute knaves fall out, and Pity, who strives to keep the peace, is seized, fastened with a halter, and left lamenting, till released by Contemplation and Perseverance. The play ends with the renunciation of their evil ways, first by Free Will and then by Imagination, whose name is changed to Good Remembrance.

Hickscorner.

On *Hickscorner* was modelled another interlude, called *Youth*, which belongs to the reign of Queen Mary; and yet another play was *Lusty Juventus*, which interlude holds two good songs, but otherwise is only noticeable for its strong affirmation of Protestant principles. Forsaking these under the inspiration of Satan the hero declines into 'abominable living,' from which he is recalled by the joint efforts of Good Counsel and Knowledge.

Lusty Juventus.

Finally, we must allude to plays in which the place of religion is occupied by love of learning. The earliest is the *Interlude of the Four Elements*. Here we may discern, perhaps, the influence of Lucretius, although the learning possessed by the writer is certainly an advance on the

The *Interlude of the Four Elements.*

acquirements of the Roman philosophical poet. It was averred by Socrates that the fairest delight was that arising from goodly lessons, and this is also the belief of one of the characters in the play, Studious Desire, who seeks to guide Humanity into the path of intellectual improvement. However, a ruffler turns up in the person of Sensual Appetite, who rudely brushes Studious Desire aside, and at the same time introduces a very welcome change of key, for it must be confessed that Studious Desire savours not 'like a knave,' but like a pedagogue, whose light shines queerly on the boards.

Other plays of the same class are John Redford's *Wit and Science*, which is considered to have been written towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII, and 'a new and pleasant interlude,' the *Marriage of Wit and Science*. This last is incomparably the best of the batch; indeed, Mr. Pollard hardly exaggerates in affirming that it has 'scarcely a bad line in it.' The real wit, as the term is now understood, is not the character so named, but his page Will, whose sallies are excellent. Still, supreme talent is needed to reconcile us to such essentially unromantic material as the wooing of Lady Science, whether her parents be Reason and Experience, or Olympian Zeus. For nearly all such dramatic experiments, the true and only theatre, as it seems to us, is a ladies' schoolroom on the occasion of a break-up party. Anywhere else, and we speak from personal observation, nothing can exceed their dismal futility and lack of interest.

The *Marriage of Wit and Science*.

The transition from the morality play to more modern conceptions of the drama was accomplished mainly through the instrumentality of one man, whom Ten Brink appropriately names 'the typical dramatist of the period.' Although for the most part differing widely from the didactic

plays, his compositions were known by the same description, 'interlude'; and, as this is a term of which frequent use has, and will be, made in these pages, it may be desirable, before proceeding further, to inquire into its origin, and that of the kindred word, 'masque.'

Without entering into needless detail, it may be remarked that 'disguisings,' as they were called, had long been an ingredient in the court festivities at Christmastide, especially on Twelfth Day, which, for the rich and noble, marked the commencement of the Carnival season. Mention of such performances occurs in the Annals of Edward III. They were more in the nature of dumb charades than dramas, since there were no speeches, and the charm lay in the rich and quaint costumes, in the dancing, and in the scenic displays, which last were ultimately on a most lavish and elaborate scale, comprising such furniture as a mountain on wheels, and a dainty fortress garrisoned by fair ladies. The ancient term, 'disguisings,' was supplanted by 'masque,' when, on Epiphany Day, 1512-13, Henry VIII and eleven of his courtiers entered the hall—at Greenwich—with visors and caps of gold, and having partaken of the banquet, desired the ladies to dance with them—an honour which some of them declined. The custom of donning masks had just been introduced from Italy, and, as in that country, became excessively popular, but there was still no suggestion of acting, save in dumb show.

Masques.

The next step was taken in 1527, when the children of the King's chapel were conducted into a sumptuous banqueting-house built expressly for the purpose, and with them two actors in splendid attire, who carried on a dialogue regarding the question which was better—riches or love. As they could not agree, knights, three aside, were called in, and debated the point in inconclusive battle. Finally,

an old man, with silvery beard, declared that both were necessary for princes, who ought to be served with love, but required riches to bestow on their lovers and friends. Thus the literary element, in however feeble a guise, obtained a footing at the court entertainments, and, from this time, began to acquire strength and importance under the name of interludes. This name points very decisively to humble beginnings, since it can only signify that the play was sandwiched between other pleasures more highly relished, not improbably between dinner and dessert

John Heywood.

John Heywood was born in 1497, it is not known where; but, as he resided in later life at North Mims in Hertfordshire, possibly at that place. A foe to Lutheran doctrine and a friend of Sir Thomas More, he succeeded by his wit in ingratiating himself with Henry VIII, from whom he received regular payments—in 1519, as a singer; in 1526, and to the close of Henry's reign, as 'a player of the King's virginals.' In 1538 he was granted a special donation of forty shillings for acting with his children an interlude before the Princess Mary, with whom he was a particular favourite, and whom, when she became eighteen, he honoured with a birthday ode. During the reign of Edward VI and his successor, Heywood retained his employment at court; but on Mary's death he withdrew to the Continent, and, in 1575, writing to Lord Burghley from Mechlin, described himself as an old man of seventy-eight. The same year he died.

Heywood achieved fame not only with his interludes, but with his epigrams, of which he composed no fewer than six hundred, and his skill in this branch of letters no doubt accounts in part for his successful career under three sovereigns, utterly unlike in temperament and disposition.

Heywood's first and least meritorious interlude has some-

thing in common with the later variety of the morality, since it abounds in casuistry. The play has four characters, Loving not Loved; Loved, not Loving; Both Loving and Loved; Neither Loved nor Loving; and the question to be resolved is which of the quartette should be adjudged the happiest. Neither of the two former advances any claim to bliss; indeed, the lady persecuted with unwelcome attentions goes so far as to compare her predicament to that of an imaginary sister confronted by a gentleman with an axe, and expected to accord her gracious assent to his cutting off her head. Infinitely more content, as well as more sanguine, are the two whose names are mentioned last. *Neither Loved nor Loving*, in his anxiety to be proclaimed the winner, goes out and returns with a pair of live squibs on his head and a baseless report that the house of the lover's beloved is afire. His object is to prove that he who loves gives hostages to Fortune, but his ruse is of no avail. At any rate, he only succeeds in tying with his rival.

The *Play of Love.*

It is evident that a play conducted on these lines has little to commend it from a dramatic point of view, and its merits, such as they are, are purely incidental. The religious, for instance, might contemplate with satisfaction the moral, which brings in the love of the divine. Fortunately for Heywood, his reputation does not depend on the quillets and quodlibets of his *Play of Love*, his other interludes being much better. His *Play of the Weather*—a subject of perennial interest—has at least this advantage, that it lends itself to humorous treatment, and it is entitled, with greater truth and felicity than some of its fellows, 'a new and very merry interlude.' Heywood provides the drama with a classical setting without, for that reason, detaching it from the life of the day. The list of characters comprises

The *Play of the Weather.*

Jupiter, Merry Report, the Vice, the Gentleman, the Merchant, the Ranger, the Water Miller, the Wind Miller, the Gentlewoman, the Laundress, and a Boy. After a preliminary discourse, in which the King of Gods and Men refers to the pretty quarrels that have arisen between divers divinities on the score of the weather, Jupiter dispatches Merry Report to gather for him the views and desires of all sorts and conditions of mortals on this troublesome question. Naturally, these are most divergent. The Gentleman wants

> weather clear,
> Cloudy, nor misty, nor no wind to blow
> For hurt in his hunting:

the Merchant,

> weather clear and measurable wind,
> As they may best bear their sails to make speed:

the Ranger:

> Extreme rage of wind trees to tear in pieces.

The Wind and the Water Millers find their interests diametrically opposed, and the Gentlewoman is hard to accommodate. She craves

> Fair close weather her beauty for to save,

which does not suit the industrious Laundress. As little does it suit the Boy, who is all for

> frost and snow continual,
> Snow to make snowballs, and frost for his pitfall.

The *Pardoner and the Friar* is such a play as Chaucer would have loved, since it assails with ridicule the mendicant orders, of which even so loyal a Catholic as Heywood was the reverse of proud. At first all goes well. The curate, or parson,

The *Pardoner and the Friar.*

lends them his parish church, the friar to preach and the pardoner to sell relics therein; but alas! they attempt to exercise their respective functions simultaneously, with the result that they first curse, and then fight each other. The parson now deems it high time to interfere, and calls upon neighbour Pratt to aid in ejecting the brawlers. Pratt complies with the request, but the friar and the pardoner both prove tough antagonists, and ultimately the parish-priest and his ally are glad to compromise the affair by consenting to the rogues' unmolested exit. Accordingly they depart with mutual anathema and unkind speeding from neighbour Pratt and the justly incensed parson.

A Merry Play.

Chaucerian, too, is *A Merry Play between John the Husband, Tyb the Wife, and Sir John the Priest,* which interlude may be described as episodical or fragmentary, as the action is evidently not complete. This quality, however, does not militate seriously against the interest of the piece, which within the assigned limits has plenty of life and movement. As regards the subject it is the old, old story of the pre-Reformation time, which in some quarters is by no means defunct or out-of-date. John the husband presents himself in a thrasonical vein. He would fain be thought a man, especially in his own household; but there his wife queens it, and unhappily she cherishes greater respect for John the priest than for her nominal lord and master. The dame brings home a pie, which proves anything but a symbol of wedded love, for straightway the pecked spouse is sent to fetch his namesake the priest, and, when that gentleman arrives, has to go for water with a leaky pail. The husband, having discovered the leakage, returns, when Sir John bestows upon him a couple of hard candles, church property, wherewith to remedy the defect. Whilst he is engaged in this mean service, Tyb and her spiritual friend contrive to consume

the pie. 'A worm,' says the proverb, 'will turn,' and at last John the husband asserts himself. On the conclusion of a fight, woman and priest make their way out, leaving the poor man in peace, whereat at first he greatly rejoices. Then his suspicions are aroused, and he fares forth in pursuit. With this, somewhat abruptly, the play ends.

The *Four P's* forms an inquisition into the comparative powers of lying possessed by a palmer, a pardoner, a pedlar, and a 'pothecary. A competition having taken place, the prize is allotted to the palmer, who has the hardihood to assert that in all his life he never knew a woman out of patience.

The *Four P.'s.*

In a *Dialogue of Wit and Folly* the discussion eddies round the question whether it is better to be witless or witty. There would seem to be but one answer to this; but the theological element is brought in. God, it is pleaded, assures the witless from loss of Heaven. However, this powerful argument of John is not permitted to triumph. James, his first opponent, is joined by Jerome, and Jerome clinches his case by protesting that 'sage Solomon' is better than 'sot Sower.' Now Sower was King Henry's fool.

Dialogue of Wit and Folly.

One of the most charming interludes is anonymous. It is entitled *Thersites*, and its hero is the famous braggart. True to his traditions, he is prodigiously eager to fight *in the abstract*; indeed the world can hardly furnish warriors of sufficient prowess to receive his challenge. Gawayne the Courteous, Kay the Crabbed, and Sir Lancelot de Lake—all three he pictures to himself as running away from him, and well he may, for the mischievous Mulciber, who fashions his armour for him, and in doing so slily affects to confound *sallet* (helmet) with salad, gives him to understand that he is invulnerable. But, alas, for boasting! it is only for a snail, ten

Thersites.

thousand times magnified by the bouncer's cowardice, to put out his horns, and immediately Thersites loses his nerve. His pet aversion, however, is a poor soldier from Calais, who is ready and willing to oblige him with what he appears to desire most—namely, a passage of arms; but Thersites, utterly appalled, scampers off, and taking refuge behind his mother's back, exclaims, 'A thousand horsemen do persecute me!'

John Bale.

If Heywood was a convinced Catholic, a celebrated contemporary, who also wrote plays, was a no less convinced Protestant. We allude to John Bale, who was many things besides a playwright, but must be considered here exclusively in that character, in which his Protestantism was at least as prominent as any other quality. In this connexion it may be observed that Henry VIII was not disposed to favour religious changes further than suited his convenience. Politically he did what many of his predecessors would have liked to do—he shook off the incubus of Papal supremacy. But he still remained Catholic in heart, and, with the sagacity of a born ruler, refused all sympathy to a party which, in the hour of its triumph, struck off his descendant's head. Thus when Bale decisively embraced Protestantism, he was forced to recognize that England afforded no safe domicile for him; accordingly, during the last six years of Henry's reign he resided in Holland. As we have seen, Heywood, for a like reason, had to adopt a like course on the accession of Queen Elizabeth.

Bale, however, is a being of such importance, that it seems desirable to glance back on his previous career. Born November 21st, 1495, at the village of Cove, near Dunwich, in Suffolk—a region grievously corroded through the encroachments of the sea—he was the son of Henry and Margaret Bale, who were poor in pelf and rich in progeny.

So at twelve John was sent to a Carmelite monastery at Norwich, and thence to another conventual foundation called by him Holme, and possibly the Carmelite Abbey of Holn in Northumberland, unless the Benedictine Abbey of Hulme on the Norfolk coast be intended. Anyhow, he graduated B.A. at Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1529, after which he was preferred to the living of Thornden in Suffolk. Lord Wentworth's influence, it is recorded in the *Vocation of John Bale*, now led him to throw in his lot with the Reformers, and, discarding his vow of celibacy, he 'took to wife the faithful Dorothy.' A sermon at Doncaster against the invocation of saints brought upon him the official notice of the Archbishop of York. He was cited also before the Bishop of London. Cromwell, however, procured his release, and for a while Bale appears to have occupied himself mainly with his pen.

The type of play he found congenial was the 'mystery.' Bale himself does not employ this term, his descriptions being rather curious. The most generic is 'interlude,' which was used to signify any sort of drama; but, convertibly and somewhat inconsequently, he employs the more familiar terms, tragedy and comedy. The latter appears particularly out of place in the titles of compositions having as their themes the solemn verities of the faith, nor can we always explain on what principle a play is called a comedy rather than a tragedy, or *vice versa*. Seeing, however, that Bale has a decided preference for the former term, it may be urged in defence of his choice that he had good precedent in the name of the greatest poem on a Christian subject—need we say?—Dante's magnificent trilogy. The undramatic character of this last is an evidence how loosely such words were used and understood in the Middle Ages, when it was supposed that the determining factor was the conclusion.

Comedies and Tragedies.

Let a piece end happily, and forthwith it became eligible to rank as comedy, albeit it contained not a single feature which either the ancients or ourselves could distinguish as comic.

Altogether, if we may trust his own list, Bale was the author of twenty-two plays, the majority of which have perished. Four he composed before his flight to the Low Countries in 1540, and the remainder subsequently. The first, said to have been composed in 1538, was his *Tragedy, or Interlude, manifesting the Chief Promises of God unto Man by all Ages in the Old Law from the Fall of Adam to the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.* To the same year apparently belong three others: *A Brief Comedy, or Interlude, of John Baptist's Preaching in the Wilderness, opening the Crafty Assaults of the Hypocrites, with the Glorious Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ; A Brief Comedy, or Interlude, concerning the Temptation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Satan in the Desert;* and *A New Comedy, or Interlude, concerning Three Laws, of Nature, Moses, and Christ, corrupted by the Sodomites, Pharisees, and Papists.*

In the before-mentioned list Bale thus enumerates his other dramas founded on the life of Christ: 'Of Christ, when he was twelve years old, one comedy; of His Baptism and Temptation, two comedies; of Lazarus raised from the Dead, one comedy; of the Council of the Bishops, one comedy; of Simon the Leper, one comedy; of the Lord's Supper and Washing the Feet, one comedy; of the Passion of Christ, two comedies; of the Sepulture and Resurrection, two comedies.' Out of the entire series there has been left only the 'comedy' on the Temptation. Other plays of Bale, not strictly belonging to his planetary system, were as follows: *Upon both Marriages of the King; The Treacheries of the Papists; Against the Adulterators of God's Word: Of the Impostures of Thomas à Becket; Of*

the Corruptions of Divine Laws; *The Image of Love;* and *King John*, which, unlike the residue, has been preserved.

King John.

This play is known to have been written after the death of Henry VIII, and at some time or other was put on the boards at Ipswich. That may have been during the reign of Edward VI, or in the days of Elizabeth; it could not have been acted in Mary's time owing to its strongly anti-papal cast. As having provoked an interdict, John made a very good Protestant, and Verity maintains him, in the teeth of Polydore Virgil, to have been both valiant and godly. However that may have been, the whole spirit of the play is fanatically Protestant, and the characters assigned to the might and minions of Rome are far from flattering. Papal jurisdiction is personified as Usurped Power, who is attired in the robes of Innocent III. Private Wealth (necessarily ill-gotten or ill-saved) is Cardinal Panulph, and Sedition, the Vice of the drama, makes no secret of the fact that he is Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. The satire is extremely pungent in places—in the speech of Dissimulation, for instance:

> To send me to heaven go ring the holy bell
> And sing for my soul a mass of Scala Celi,
> That I may climb up aloft with Enoch and Heli:
> I do not doubt it but I shall be a saint.
> Provide a gilder mine image to paint,
> I die for the church with Thomas of Canterbury:
> Ye shall fast my vigil, and upon my day be merry.
> No doubt I shall do miracles in a while,
> And therefore let me be shrined in the north aisle.

The circumstance that Shakespeare wrote a play of the same name may lead us to set a wholly fictitious value on Bale's interlude in connexion with the development of the English drama. It is, of course, not improbable that his

rather eccentric experiment may have had the result of assisting to turn the thoughts of his abler successors to past reigns as subjects for their compositions, though its influence must have been inconsiderable compared with that of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, not a dramatic work at all. What cannot be mistaken is the vital distinction between the polemical temper in which Bale envisages history and the philosophic breadth of the Elizabethans, who seek to discover in both great and little the springs of human conduct, and, by laying bare the subtle processes of mind and soul and sense, the inner workings of those mysterious motives and passions which are the common heritage and collectively never die, with their ultimate outward effects, inform the intellect and prepare the heart for whatever experiences of weal or woe the future may have in store. The sane and serious purpose and strong imagination of those artists could not away with characters that were not avowedly flesh and blood, and so Bale's abstractions, sometimes too real to act well their parts, vanish from the stage to make room for recognizable forms, with historical names, in their natural environment.

CHAPTER II.

ORIGINS OF THE MODERN THEATRE.

The Renaissance and the Stage.

Many ingredients went to form the English drama in its perfection, and amongst them were Continental and classical influences, evidence of which must now be set forth. The Dutch miracle play, *Everyman*, is an example of Continental influence, but the south of Europe, Italy and Spain, proved in general a more fruitful source of inspiration, and a source whose fruitfulness was continually growing. As early as 1530 Rastall printed an interlude drawn from the Spanish prose-novel, or, as it was termed, 'tragicomedy' of *Calisto and Meliboea*. These are the names of the hero and heroine, but the story is best known in relation to the witch or bawd Celestina, to whom Calisto, on his repulse by Meliboea, has recourse for assistance, and who may be deemed the principal character. The vicissitudes of the popular tale belong to the history of Spanish rather than English literature, and therefore no more need be said of the matter.

Meanwhile Italian writers had been busy with imitations of Terence and Plautus; *I Suppositi*, a play which Gascoigne was to translate, was stated by Ariosto, its father, to have been modelled on both authors. As the inevitable result of the Renaissance, the craze extended to England, where its chief manifestation was admiration for Latin plays; and, as we shall shortly see, it did not pass without

enriching the native literature with a classically-moulded drama. Before dealing with this it will be well to glance rapidly at the situation in which it was a feature. And first it may be observed that Palsgrave, whose name occurs elsewhere in these pages, edited for use in schools a dramatic version of the parable of the Prodigal Son entitled *Acolastus*, which was the handiwork of a contemporary Dutch schoolmaster, Willem de Volder, and in character markedly Terentian. English scholars, however, had not been idle. John Ritwyse, the first surmaster of St. Paul's, wrote a Latin play called *Dido*, which his pupils acted in the presence of Cardinal Wolsey, and other dramas in the classic tongues are recorded, together with the names of their authors. The practice did not lack encouragement, for not only in the public schools, but in the universities, the performance of Latin plays became a custom, of which, at the present time, the most familiar survival is the Westminster play. For this particular exhibition the traditional procedure is to select from the comedies of Terence and Plautus, but, before convenience hardened into rule, it seems likely enough that masters possessing the requisite talent, and filled with enthusiasm for the drama, furnished their young Thespians—occasionally—with a play of their own composition.

Latin Plays.

Commonly it would have been a Latin play, but not necessarily so. Such at least is the inference to be drawn from the authorship of *Roister Doister*, which, as Dr. Arber observes, is regarded as the 'transition-play' from the mysteries and interludes of the Middle Ages to the comedies of more modern times. The author was Nicholas Udall (or, as his name is also spelt, Woodall), sometime Master of Eton, where he thrashed Tusser.

Nicholas Udall.

'Among the writings of Udall about the year 1540,' says Warton, 'are recited *Plures Comediae* and a tragedy, *De Papatu*, on the Papacy, written probably to be acted by his scholars.' Apparently, therefore, it was a freak of Udall (who, by the way, despite his Protestantism, contrived to remain on excellent terms with Queen Mary), to substitute for the usual Latin play, at one of the Christmas celebrations, a novel English comedy. This he could accomplish the more easily in that, as he intimates in his prologue, he followed in the footsteps of Terence and Plautus,

Which among the learned at this day bears the bell.

The leading facts of Udall's life are briefly as follows. Born about the year 1506, in Hampshire, he came of a family long settled at Wykeham in that county. In 1520, he was, at the age of fourteen, admitted scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and four years later elected Probationer Fellow of that society. When we next hear of him, it is as the writer of certain 'verses and ditties' in honour of the coronation of Queen Anne Boleyn, in which loyal pursuit he had a rival or partner in John Leland, the antiquary. As she rode from the Tower of London to Westminster Abbey, some of the poems, it appears, were actually recited to 'her grace' as part of a magnificent public reception by the mayor and citizens. The following year, Udall proceeded to the degree of Master of Arts, and was appointed Master of Eton at a salary of ten pounds per annum. This post he retained till 1543. In 1537 he was presented to the living of Braintree, which he resigned in 1544. After the accession of Edward VI, he received from that monarch the rectory of Calbourne in the Isle of Wight, and in 1551 he was admitted to a prebend at Windsor, but it must be confessed that Udall's mode of subsistence at this period is a little obscure. In 1555, or thereabouts, he

became Master of Westminster School, but in November, 1556, was compelled to relinquish the office on the re-establishment by Mary of the monastery. A month later he died, and was buried at St. Margaret's Westminster.

Paraphrase of the New Testament.

From the time he wrote the ditties for the mayor and citizens of London, Udall's intellectual interests were divided between the Reformed religion, the new learning, and the stage. His most noteworthy literary performance in support of Protestantism was, perhaps, his participation in the Englishing of Erasmus's *Paraphrase of the New Testament* in 1542-45. Himself responsible for the paraphrase of St. Luke's Gospel, he aided the enterprise in other ways. For instance, he supplied the texts of the Gospels, excluding that of St. Mark, with a view to showing the correspondence between text and paraphrase; and he wrote, as introductions to the Gospels, three letters addressed to King Edward, the Reader, and Queen Catherine Parr respectively. In the preface to St. John's Gospel, which was translated partly by the Princess (afterwards Queen) Mary, and partly, when she fell ill, by her chaplain, the Rev. F. Malet, D.D., Udall speaks emphatically of the state of female education in England, declaring that numbers of young girls were so 'well seen' in Greek and Latin, and had so ripe a knowledge of the holy scriptures and theology that they could, with much grace, 'indite' and translate for the advantage of the unlettered masses. In 1542 Udall published a translation of the third and fourth books of Erasmus's *Apophthegms* with an introduction and notes.

Answers to the Commoners.

1549 was the date of the West Country rising in favour of the restoration of the mass, the giving back of the abbey lands, and compliance with the six articles. Udall combatted these demands in an *Answer to the Articles of the Commoners of*

Devonshire and Cornwall. Two years later he translated Peter Martyr's tract on the Eucharist, and all this time he was incessantly expounding and defending the new doctrines in the pulpit. Yet in 1554 a warrant dormer from Queen Mary to the Master of the Revels makes mention of our 'well-beloved Nicholas Udall,' praises his diligence in the setting forth of dialogues and interludes, and authorizes the loan of apparel for those objects. Doubtless Udall's good fortune in escaping the resentment of the Papists may be attributed to his many-sidedness and his personal intimacy with the Papist queen.

Flowers of Latin Speaking.

We must now hark back some twenty years to Udall's early career as an instructor of youth. In 1533, the year before his appointment to the headmastership of Eton, he had published and dedicated to his pupils, *Flowers of Latin Speaking*, culled from the first three comedies of Terence; and in 1538 appeared a new and enlarged edition of the work, which forms, as it were, a stepping-stone from a schoolmaster's ordinary routine to the play which made Udall famous. As has been stated, *Roister Doister* was probably acted by schoolboys in lieu of a Latin comedy, whether by Terence or Plautus or some modern imitator. We cannot be sure, but it seems not unlikely that Udall wrote several dramas in English. One he must certainly have written, for in 1564, when Queen Elizabeth paid a visit to Cambridge, she was regaled with 'an English play called *Ezekias*, made by Mr. Udall, and handled by King's College men only.' The traditional connexion between Eton and King's, both founded by Henry VI, imparts the strongest probability to this statement.

As regards *Roister Doister* it has been commonly supposed that it was written and acted during Udall's headmastership of Eton. This notion rests on by no means

safe grounds, and Professor Hales has shown in a contribution to *Englische Studien* (xviii Band, 1893), '*Roister Doister.*' On the Date of the First English Comedy,' that there are better reasons for assigning it to the year 1552, when Udall may have already had some connexion with Westminster School. Mr. Hales relies on two main lines of argument. First, there is no allusion to *Roister Doister* in the two earliest editions of his pupil's (Thomas Wilson's) *Rule of Reason*, whereas, in the third, the unlucky love-letter is adduced as an 'awful example' of ambiguity. Secondly, Udall's play must have been written after Heywood's *Proverbs*, of which it betrays an acquaintance. These considerations, developed at some length in the aforenamed paper, appear conclusive in favour of the later date.

Roister Doister seems to have been inspired very largely by the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus, being directed against empty boasting. The principal character—Ralph Roister Doister—is a rich fool with a high opinion of his own gallantry (in both senses), notwithstanding mortifying proofs to the contrary. His pitiful weaknesses are pitilessly laid bare in the prologue, wherein his companion, Matthew Merrygreek, a parasite and sycophant of humour, opens his mouth freely about himself and his patron, over whom he has established complete ascendancy. Merrygreek has many a host and benefactor, but it is on this silly sheep, Ralph Roister Doister, that he counts most securely:

> Truly of all men he is my chief banker,
> Both for meat and money,

at the same time he heartily despises him.

One of Doister's unhappy delusions is that all women are enamoured of him, and although he has lately sustained

a refusal and finds matrimony an insuperable difficulty, he will not allow himself to be damped and goes on falling in love as deeply and as conceitedly as ever. Merrygreek's services are requisitioned as go-between, and the rogue accepts the commission with devout satisfaction, as he wants a new coat. This time the proposed quarry is a widow, Dame Christian Custance, 'worth a thousand pound,' who, as Merrygreek honourably cautions his employer, has already 'promised' a merchant named Gawin Goodluck. Ralph, however, resolves to cut Goodluck out, and, this being his mood, the flatterer descants on his goodly person, and dishes up compliments which any sensible man would have rejected as satire or 'chaff,' but Doister complacently swallows.

Sundry ruses are resorted to in order to open and maintain communications with the lady; but she is very brusque, not in the least romantic, and has no inclination whatever to break faith with her chosen swain, who is at sea. Neither *billets doux* nor personal addresses make any impression upon her, except to inflame her anger, especially on the occasion when Doister presses his suit in the hearing of Sim Suresby, Gawin Goodluck's messenger, and thus provokes the ebullition:

> The Devil shall have thee;
> I have gotten this hour more shame and harm by thee
> Than all thy life thou canst do me honesty.

A curious incident in the affair is the fate of an epistle which Doister copies, so blundering the punctuation as to make it convey a meaning exactly the opposite of that intended. We quote a few of the lines to show how cleverly Udall manages the *contretemps*. Dame Custance reads:

> Sweet mistress, whereas I love you nothing at all,
> Regarding your substance and riches chief of all,

For your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit,
I commend me unto you never a whit.
Sorry to hear report of your good welfare,
For (as I hearsay) your conditions are,
That ye be worthy favour of no living man,
To be abhorred of every honest man.
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice.
Nothing at all to Virtue giving her due price.
Wherefore concerning marriage ye are thought
Such a fine paragon as ne'er honest man bought.
And now by these presents I do you advertise
That I am minded to marry you in no wise.
For your goods and substance, I could be content
To take you as you are, etc., etc.

What the scrivener penned was quite different:

Sweet mistress, whereas I love you nothing at all
Regarding your riches and substance: chief of all
For your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit
I commend me unto you: never a whit
Sorry to hear report of your good welfare.
For (as I hearsay) such your conditions are,
That ye be worthy favour: of no living man
To be abhorred: of every honest man
To be taken for a woman inclined to vice
Nothing at all: to virtue giving her due price.
Wherefore concerning marriage ye are thought
Such a fine paragon as ne'er honest man bought.
And now by these presents I do you advertise
That I am minded to marry you: in no wise
For your goods and substance: I can be content
To take you as you are.

At last Dame Custance, weary of his importunities, turns out with her maids, and all set upon the serenaders with domestic weapons. The result is not only the ignominious rout of Doister's party, which Merrygreek perfidiously ex-

pedites with intentional maladroitness, but his patron's tardy disillusionment. Throughout the piece he never once acts up to his constantly reiterated pretensions, and the final scene exhibits him as a *protégé* of his rival, whom he congratulates on his safe return—not insincerely, since Dame Custance pursues him with her taunts always, and Gawin Goodluck, supremely good-natured, acts as a screen. This play is generally described as the first English comedy, but, in parts, at any rate, it is broad enough to be reckoned rather a farce.

Gorboduc.

It will have been noticed that the metre of *Roister Doister* is rough Alexandrine in rhymed couplets. In the course of the next twenty years, as has been shown elsewhere, blank verse came into fashion, and the first English tragedy of which we know anything, was written in this newfangled metre. We refer to *Gorboduc*, the joint production of Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, and specially composed for the banqueting night of their inn—the Inner Temple—A.D. 1561-2. It appears that the Christmas of this year was observed as a 'grand Christmas,' which signified elaborate festivities lasting from Christmas Day to New Year's Day and its Banqueting Night. It is obviously impossible to provide a minute account of these ceremonies, which were both splendid and entertaining, and included hunting-scenes and the mimic court of a Lord of Misrule. Suffice it to say that the performance of *Gorboduc* was the climax of the revels.

The play was, in a certain sense, topical, since it was designed to enforce the necessity of national concord at a time when Elizabeth's Protestant subjects were at variance, and the Catholics gaining strength daily. The plot was drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britanniae*, whence came information concerning Arthur, Lear, and

others, who have since made large figures in our literature, with much else that seems, especially by contrast, strangely unfamiliar. Such is the story of *Gorboduc*. As in the days of Elizabeth, the great aim of politicians was to establish one rule throughout the island—a state of things attained by Lear, Cunidagius, and their successors, down to the time of Gorboduc, who had two sons, Ferrex and Pollex, equally ambitious of succeeding him. In the tragedy, the old king endeavours to make peace by dividing the kingdom between them during his life, but this arrangement fails to satisfy Porrex, the younger of the two, who slays his brother, and, in revenge for the death of her favourite, is himself slain by his mother. This unnatural conduct arouses the wrath of the people, who rebel and murder both king and queen. Then the nobility assail the people, who perish in great numbers; and finally, owing to the failure of a legitimate heir to the throne, break out into civil war, with disastrous results to their order and their land. The unrelieved grimness and gruesomeness of the play reminds one of Kyd. It was, of course, intentional, and, far from militating against its success, was one of the main reasons for the loud applause which hailed its production. A fortnight later, by the command of Queen Elizabeth, it was performed before the court at Whitehall.

In 1565 the tragedy was published in a corrupt form, and without the knowledge of its authors, who, in 1571, issued their own version, altering the name to *Ferrex and Porrex*. This was in one sense an improvement, since the pivot of the plot is the ruthless ambition of Gorboduc's sons, particularly of the younger. On the other hand, it is only in the fifth act that the king is missed from the boards; during the first four he is incontestably the central figure of the drama. Each act is introduced by an allegorical masque in which 'coming events cast their shadows before,' and is

brought to a close by stanzas containing the reflexions of a chorus representing four wise elders of Britain. The latter feature is due to the play being an imitation of Seneca's tragedies. On the 1st of February following, *Gorboduc* was succeeded by a court piece, called *Julius Caesar*.

Misogonus.

The inn-yards were the theatres, so far as the groundlings were concerned, and the new school of dramatists—young university men—needed to study the demands of such audiences, whose more select members occupied a gallery, below which the stage was erected. Wit, humour, drollery, were the primary requisites; and, despite its forbidding name, these were present in full measure in a play entitled *Misogonus*, and roughly of the date of *Gorboduc*. The plot almost parodies the parable of the Prodigal Son, since the good father, Philogonus, has a bad son, Misogonus, whom Eupelas, a friend of the family, vainly sets himself to reclaim, and who, in company with Cacurgus (*alias* Will Summer, Henry VIII's fool), plunges into all manner of dissipation. The finding of an older and better brother leads to a change; and in the end Misogonus renounces his evil ways. The principal object of the play was, however, amusement.

Cambyses.

In the *First Part of Henry IV* Falstaff observes: 'Give me a cup of sack to make mine eyes look red, that it might be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein.' This is thought to be an allusion to a play called *Cambyses*—probably as early as *Gorboduc*—written by Thomas Preston, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and afterwards Master of Trinity, who dubbed it a comedy. It is hardly that, but is definable, perhaps, as the later morality on the way to becoming comedy. It has, for instance, a Vice in Ambidexter, nor is he the only allegorical character. The parts were many and the actors but

eight. This we learn from a copy printed in black letter, which shows how the various *rôles* were allocated. Preston was not only a dramatic author, but an amateur actor. In 1564 he had the honour of playing before Queen Elizabeth, in the tragedy of *Dido* (see p. 23), and so pleased her that she granted him a pension of twenty pounds.

Richard Edwards.

The name of Richard Edwards is already familiar as that of the editor of a charming anthology. In introducing him in that character, we briefly referred to his office as Master of the Queen's Chapel, and his plays. He, too, was a university man. Born in Somerset in 1523, in 1547 he became a student at Christ Church, Oxford, then brand-new, and his tragedy, or 'tragical comedy,' as he preferred to call it, *Damon and Pythias*, smacks of the erudition acquired in his house and *alma mater*. The play is believed to be the identical piece by Edwards played before the court at Christmas, 1564, and the supposition receives support from the lines at the close:

> True friends for their true prince refuse not their death:
> The Lord grant her such friends, most noble Elizabeth.

Damon and Pythias.

Damon and Pythias is avowedly ambitious, but although he sets out with a slighting reference to the older interludes, and claims for his drama that it is built on the precepts of Horace, Edwards himself does not achieve complete success, his greatest error being the insertion of a diverting, but wholly irrelevant, episode in the penultimate section, or what we may term the fourth act, of the play. The real explanation of, and only possible justification for, this procedure, was the circumstance that an English audience of the period would not be put off without fooling. This might have been distributed more or less evenly throughout the play, but the

fact will not escape notice that the character of this scene is entirely modern, whereas the drama proper presents a decent air of fidelity to the antique. Edwards was probably not influenced solely by artistic motives, as he specifically disavows all intention of alluding to any court save that of Syracuse, and this seems to betray some nervousness. Possibly if the fooling had been intermittent, the author might have found it difficult or impossible to escape the imputation of *double entendre*. On the whole, however, it seems likely that the main reason why Grim the Collier was shaved, was in order to afford relief to the hard-worked theme—namely, the nature of friendship.

This is illustrated twice over, both as what it is, and what it is not. Its substance and principle is self-denial, and of this the rival adventurers, Aristippus and Carisophus, are necessarily incapable. For their own ends they affect friendship, but both are steeped in insincerity. On the relations of the pair, one of whom was a distinguished philosopher, is grafted the tale of Damon and Pythias, names eloquent of true attachment. Carisophus finds congenial employment in brewing mischief for these devoted friends, but after a time sets himself against Eubulus, who gives him a fall. Then he turns to Aristippus, only to discover how worthless are his professions. Another play of Edwards was his *Palamon and Arcite*, the performance of which in the hall of Christ Church, in 1566, was witnessed by Queen Elizabeth, and attended by a most untoward incident. Through the partial collapse of the stage three persons were killed and more injured, but, after repairs had been made, the playing was resumed, to the extreme delight of the royal spectator, from whom the ugly truth must have been concealed.

The first English comedy was once supposed to be, not *Roister Doister*, but *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. This mistake

Gammer Gurton's Needle.

was due to Thomas Warton, who, having been betrayed into thinking that the play was first printed in 1551, gave currency to the fiction in his *History of English Poetry*. While, however, there is no question that this statement is erroneous, it is probable that *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was the first English play, whether tragic or comic, to be represented at either Oxford or Cambridge. The 'pithy, pleasant, and merry comedy,' was played at Christ's College, in the latter university, in the, dramatically speaking, *annus mirabilis*, 1566; so far as is known, it was not printed until 1575.

The authorship of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is a question which has for some years engaged the attention of scholars, and although it hardly admits, at any rate in the present conditions, of final solution, one result may be said to have been attained—namely, the acquittal of Still as the probable writer. John Still was a member of Christ's College, Cambridge, who subsequently had a brilliant career in his university, being elected Master of St. John's and Master of Trinity in succession. In 1575 he succeeded to the office of Vice-Chancellor; and finally, in 1593, he was advanced to the bishopric of Bath and Wells, and held the see till his death in 1608.

This juvenile effort, were it his, would appear extremely whimsical in the light of his dignified after life, but was it his? The only reason for the surmise is that the title-page of the edition printed in 1575 conveys the intimation that it was acted 'long before' at Christ's College, Cambridge, and was written by 'Mr. S.' As Still was at the college about 1560, and his name begins with an 'S,' Mr. Isaac Reed conjectured, late in the eighteenth century, that the future prelate was the person intended. This, without the least consideration of Still's personal characteristics, which render it most improbable that he had anything to do with

comedy. Thus in 1573 Archbishop Parker describes him as 'a young man better mortified than some other forty or fifty years of age'; and another eulogizes his 'staidness and gravity.' Unless, therefore, we are driven by overwhelming testimony to accept the opposite conclusion, we shall be chary of admitting even the most distant possibility of Still being the author of this humorous sketch.

Such overwhelming testimony cannot be produced, and therefore we are inclined to lend an ear to alternative suggestions.

A fellow of Christ's from 1559 to 1561, William Stevenson, can be proved to have written plays—one, certainly, in 1559-60; another, possibly, in 1553-4. Assuming that Stevenson wrote *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, there arises a slight difficulty about the date of the play. It is noticeable that in July, 1563, the publisher Colwell paid 4*d.* for a license to print a play entitled *Diccon of Bedlam*, which may have been our play, and this, if written by Stevenson, would have been two or three years old, unless, indeed, Stevenson composed it after he had ceased to be fellow.

These remarks set forth substantially Mr. Henry Bradley's views as expounded in his introduction to the copy of the play printed in Professor Gayley's *Representative English Comedies* (1903). Professor Boas, so well known for his brilliant edition of Kyd and other studies in the pre-Shakespearean drama, is disposed to support the Stevensonian theory, but with qualifications. He points out (in a private letter) that it does not follow, because the play was acted at Christ's, that the writer was necessarily a member of that college, and he grants weight to the confident assertion of the Marprelate writer that Bridges was the author, although Bridges was at Pembroke College. In *Anglia* (1896) Ross puts forward the notion that 'Mr. S.' is a 'blind' of some sort, standing, it may be, for the

last letter or the last syllable of the name 'Bridges.' This is possible, if not very likely. Professor Boas's general conclusion is as follows: 'I think Mr. Bradley's ascription of the play to Stevenson, though plausible and probable, is by no means certain, and that more may be said for Bridges' authorship than he allows.' As regards Bridges,[1] Mr. Bradley's position is that he either collaborated with 'Mr. S.' or else revised the play. In our opinion, the evidence, such as it is, is all in favour of Stevenson as the original author, but it may be hoped that the happy discovery of some contemporary allusion may yet settle the question once for all.

The comedy affords a glimpse into a rustic interior, where Gammer Gurton is descried patching up spouse Hodge's breeches. Her task is interrupted by the escapade of the cat, which overturns the milk-pan, and, on returning from the chase, the dame cannot find her needle. Hence the title of the *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. In point of fact, the needle has been left in the seat of Hodge's garment, whence it is driven by Diccon of Bedlam with a mighty clap into a fleshy portion of the good man's anatomy. The whereabouts of the little implement are thus revealed, though only after a breeze between Gammer Gurton and her neighbour, Dame Chat, whom Diccon mischievously accuses of finding the needle. The play contains nothing morally offensive, but its exuberant humour is not always confined within the limits of delicacy or good taste. A song from this drama already cited, is a good specimen of its quality—vigorous and full of spirit, but bluff, coarse, and unchastened.

The first English prose comedy is George Gascoigne's translation of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*, which he absurdly ren-

[1] John Bridges is best known in connexion with the Martin Marprelate controversy provoked by his voluminous *Defence of the Government of the Church of England* (1587).

ders *The Supposes*, evidently being unaware that the true meaning of the term is 'substitutes.' Gascoigne's ignorance on the point is the more surprising, as Ariosto had plainly stated:

The Supposes.

> *Questa supposizione nostra significa*
> *Quel che in volgar si dice porre in cambio.*

Similarly he informs us that the fable is modelled on the *Eunuchus* of Terence and the *Captivi* of Plautus. The metre of Ariosto's play is the peculiar variety known as *endecasillabi sdruccioli*—that is to say, blank verse with five accents, terminating in two unaccented syllables. This was hardly imitable in English, and Gascoigne, without more ado, resorted to prose as his medium. The Italian drama is not quite in keeping with our English notions of taste; but, as a set-off, it possesses indubitable grace of style. To this redeeming virtue Gascoigne's version does far from justice, being in many places sadly crude and unpolished.

In another translation, Gascoigne collaborated with Francis Kinwelmarsh. Their choice was the *Jocasta* of Ludovico Dolce, an Italian poet, who was still alive, though fated to die three years later. Both plays—*The Supposes* and *Jocasta*—belong to the year 1566. Of Dolce's work it is needless to say more than that it was an imitation of Euripides, with a Senecan lyric chorus. As regards the translation, the first and fourth acts were undertaken by Kinwelmarsh, and the second, third, and fifth by Gascoigne; and, doubtless by mutual agreement, departure was made from Dolce's variety of metres by the use of ordinary blank verse throughout. The quality of the verse is not to be decried, exhibiting, as it does, the dignity belonging to its kind.

Jocasta.

Between *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta* may be noticed several

points of contact. If the former was written for the 'Grand Christmas' of the Inner Temple, Gascoigne's plays were designed for a like festival in the hall of Gray's Inn. Moreover, as we have seen, each separate act of *Gorboduc* was ushered in with a masque, or dumb show, and *Jocasta* was furnished by its ingenious translator with similar inventions. Probably, too, the selection of the play was not made at random, and one of the reasons for it may well have been the resemblance of its subject to that of *Gorboduc*. For here again the staple of the composition is a quarrel between brothers, Eteocles and Polynices being the antagonists, instead of Ferrex and Porrex. Nor must it be forgotten that the metre of *Gorboduc*, as of *Jocasta*, is blank verse. Attached to the later play is an epilogue specially composed for it by Christopher Yelverton.

In conclusion, it will be well to say something of the obstacles opposed to the progress of the drama. The court, as we have observed, was favourable to the art, but there was a large body of opinion irreconcileably hostile to all manner of theatrical exhibitions. Many of the clergy, for instance, detested plays, and when the plague attacked London in 1563, Sir William Cecil (afterwards Lord Burghley), the Secretary of State, was recommended by Archbishop Grindal to prohibit them for a year, and, if he would, for ever. The Mayor and Corporation, also, subjected actors to harassing restrictions, so that Burbage and his confraternity fled from their jurisdiction, and the old familiar inn-yards were deserted for large new theatres built without the liberties.

Rout of the players.

This was in 1576. In that very year there arrived in London from Christ Church, Oxford, a young Kentishman named Stephen Gosson, who was to distinguish himself as a severe and able censor of the stage, but in those days seemed more likely to shine

Stephen Gosson.

as an ornament of the profession. In a short time he became known to the audience of the Curtain, where he was one of the actors. Gosson, however, was not only a player, but a playwright. He wrote a tragedy entitled *Catiline's Conspiracies*, a comedy, *Captain Mario*, and another piece, *Praise at Parting*, which he calls a 'moral.' Before he was twenty-four he had made a name for himself as a poet also; in pastoral verse, especially, he was regarded by contemporaries as excellent. Very little of his poetry has been preserved; but the two or three pieces that remain create an impression of amplitude and tuneableness.

In 1579 Gosson suddenly turned his back upon his former aspirations, which he proceeded to vilify in a treatise—the *School of Abuse*. The cause of this change can hardly be in doubt. It had become a regular practice of the preachers at St. Paul's Cross to inveigh against the evils of play-going. The new Puritan party was particularly displeased with the theatres, because acting took place on Sunday, and thus the attention of the people was diverted from the pious admonitions to which they might otherwise have listened. In his later treatise, *Plays Confuted*, Gosson thus illustrates at once the zeal and failure of the crusade. 'The abominable practices of plays in London,' he says, 'have been by godly preachers both at Paul's Cross and elsewhere so zealously, so learnedly, so loudly cried out upon to small redress, that I may well say of them, as the philosophers report of the moving of the heavens, we never hear them, because we ever hear them.' The popularity of his own play, to which he testifies, affords him no pleasure. He describes it as a 'pig of my own sow.'

The *School of Abuse*.

Gosson's new attitude naturally produced a ferment among the actors, who answered it by bringing out his own productions—a fair revenge, if they stopped there, but there,

the indignant dramatist asseverated, they did not stop. 'These,' says he, 'they very impudently affirm to be written by me since I had let out my invective against them,' whereas, according to his own account, he had left London to read 'with pupils and withered in the country for want of sap.' In the meantime he was guilty of the remarkable folly of dedicating, without permission asked or obtained, the controversial *School of Abuse* to Philip Sidney, who, as appears from an early letter of Edmund Spencer, scantily appreciated the honour. Indeed, it seems probable that Sidney was provoked to pen his *Apology for Poetry* by the false position in which it placed him. Unaware of his victim's resentment, Gosson, still in his rustic retreat, dedicated to the poet another work, the *Ephemerides of Phialo*, the preface of which contains confident allusions to the distasteful publication and the dogs that barked at it. Probably, however, by the year 1582, when Gosson issued *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*, he had found out his mistake, for the work was inscribed to Sir Francis Walsingham.

Indiscretions.

Gosson was a man of much learning and equal talent, and although a Puritan, was sufficiently genial, while his wit and knowledge of the world, in spite of his singular blunder, are incontestable. In his *Apology for the School of Abuse*, published in 1579, he insists that he touches only the abuses of poetry, music, and the drama, not the arts themselves; but a dispassionate critic can hardly accept this account of the matter. In the *School of Abuse* itself he refuses to allow that the reformation of the drama, which he admits to have taken place, is an adequate reason for tolerating dramatic performances—the typical Puritan position. So far as his own conduct was concerned, Gosson was true to himself. He died, rector of St. Botolph's, in 1624, aged sixty-nine.

An explanation.

THE PROSE WRITERS.

CHAPTER I.

LEADERS OF REFORM.

This chapter will seek to connect the reform movement initiated by Wyclif, and never suppressed in spite of 'hangment,' the roasting of Lord Cobham, and similar judicial atrocities, with the ecclesiastical compromise in which the tenets of the Lollards obtained substantial recognition, though not absolute victory. The present work can concern itself only with the literary phases of that Titanic struggle, in which even the most moderate and cautious, even defenders of the faith, found it perilous to engage.

Reginald Pecock.

The majority of the theologians betook themselves to Latin, but there emerges from the ruck of tractarians the impressive figure of a man who did not disdain the vulgar tongue, and handled it in such a way as to extort from us a measure of praise hardly less ample than is universally accorded to Wyclif as a master of prose. The position of Reginald Pecock corresponds exactly with that of neither of the contending parties, and this fact imparts a singular interest both to his work and to his career.

This brave and very able clerk, a Welshman by birth, was elected Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, in October, 1417, and four years later was ordained priest. Migrating

to London, he achieved much worldly success, largely through the countenance afforded him by Humphry, Duke of Gloucester, who was Protector of the realm, and a great friend to men of learning. In 1431 he was appointed Master of Whittington College, founded by the celebrated Sir Richard Whittington, and Rector of St. Michael Royal, with which the college was associated; and, in 1444, the Duke of Gloucester promoted him to the bishopric of St. Asaph. As regards his outer life, this brief account must for the present suffice.

Meanwhile turn we to Pecock's literary efforts, which were directed entirely to the religious questions of the day. Most of his early writings were purely ephemeral, and derive their chief interest from the circumstance that they were written in English. His first work to merit particular mention is his *Donat*, an introduction to the principal truths of Christianity, which was published in 1440, and took the form of a dialogue between father and son. A sequel appeared several years later under the title of *Follower to the Donat*. Both works appealed to the higher intelligence of the nation, and evoked abundant criticism from his Lollard opponents.

Follower to the Donat.

Far more bitter, however, was the resentment aroused by Pecock's line of conduct in a matter on which he himself felt deeply, and in which he essayed, without success, the almost hopeless task of peace-making. One of the main supports of the Lollard cause stood in the unpopularity of the clergy, in the scandal of bishops who did not preach, of parsons who did not reside in their parishes, and of a foreign power—the Papal Curia—whose ceaseless exactions tended to the impoverishment of the land. Again and again these abuses had attracted the attention of satirists innocent of designs against the unity or doctrine of the Church; indeed, the degeneracy of the priests was a stock subject of

writers, like Heywood, to whom the Church as an institution was sacred. In a sermon at St. Paul's Cross in 1447, Pecock took up the cudgels on behalf of his maligned order, and went the length of defending some of the worst and most intolerable of the grievances for which it had been impeached. The court and the bench of bishops, not yet aware of all that was in and to come out of Pecock, sustained him with their approval, but the general effect of his deliverance was to summon into existence a body of hostile opinion not confined to heretics, and sufficient to daunt a less resolute heart.

Repressor of Overmuch Blaming.

Pecock was not daunted. Could he have foreseen all that was to follow, it is possible that he might have been. As it was, he pursued his course undeterred and undismayed by the clamour his words had excited, and committed his views to writing—a form in which they could be examined and weighed with coolness and deliberation. The mere title of his book was as inoffensive as title could be, save, indeed, to those whose bigotry would brook no apology or contradiction. It was *Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*. When we come to the nature of the contents, our judgement may be different, although neither the style nor the tone can be deemed aggressively polemical.

The work is addressed to the Lollards, whose weapons Pecock adopted, and whom he attempted to reason into a more amiable frame of mind towards the official representatives of church tradition. It is characteristic of the man that he should commence his argument with a text drawn from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, giving it not as it appears in the Vulgate, but in the current English of the period—'Undernyme thou, biseche thou, and blame thou, in all patience and doctrine.' This was borrowing or rifling from the Lollard's own armoury and

represented the kind of conduct which, in Pecock's belief, was becoming both for them and for himself. It must not be supposed, however, that the bishop's dissertation is composed of general remonstrances and particular disproofs. He admits, as he could scarcely help doing, that corruptions, like ill weeds, may flourish here and there, and these, he says, 'I shall not be about to excuse, neither defend, but pray, speak, and write that the clergy forsake them, leave, and amend.' When the question is not of individual wrong-doing, but of images in churches or pilgrimages to the 'mind-places' of saints, the case is altered, and on points like these, the bishop undertakes to champion the propriety of those who order and observe such 'governances.'

Thus Pecock's aim is rather philosophic than historical or statistical, his purpose being to demonstrate, with all the precision—not to say stiffness—of the scholastic method, that the leading objections to Catholic practices, and the subjective courts of appeal substituted for hoar authority, rest on no solid foundations. In this way he hopes to cut the ground from under the Lollards' feet and 'repress' the reasonings which had made great progress among the common people. He maps out for himself a fairly extensive programme in which he proposes to establish the legitimacy of eleven procedures or 'governances,' as he calls them. This programme he did not completely carry out, probably for the reason that he felt his principal trains of thought had been adequately developed, and that, with regard to the points which had been left undiscussed, it was sufficient to furnish references to other writings in which he had dealt with them.

It is not worth while to give a formal analysis of Pecock's arguments, but it will be expedient to state some of his more important positions. First, then, he takes up his

stand against Bibliolatry. He shows that the Lollard, in his reverence for Holy Scripture, desires to make it the sole and only standard with regard to details of conduct, which should be regulated in accordance with natural law. This, he protests, is as truly the law of God as any precept of the inspired writings. The Lollard, however, insists on the production of a definite sanction, preferably a text of the New Testament, for every act and 'governance.' As against this view, Pecock maintains that 'it longeth not to Holy Scripture, neither it is his office into which God hath him ordained, neither it is his part, for to ground any governance or deed or service of God, or any law of God, or any truth which man's reason by nature may find, learn, or know.' The noblest task a man can set himself is to reconcile apparent contradictions between the verdict of reason and the sentence of Holy Writ, but, with surprising boldness, Pecock affirms the superiority of the inner book of man's soul to the outward Book of parchment. His opponents also claimed the fullest independence in exegesis, but the private interpretation of Scripture is not at all what Pecock means. On the contrary, he refutes the opinion that any meek Christian man or woman can infallibly understand, in proportion to his meekness, the oracles of God, even where they are most profoundly obscure, as in the Apocalypse. Meekness and reason are plainly widely different qualifications for unlocking the mysteries of Divine law, and Pecock points out the need of an educated clergy capable of appreciating the why and wherefore of usages and beliefs not founded on the Bible alone, but on a harmony of reason and revelation. From this he proceeds to traverse ground already covered by his famous sermon, vindicating the existing forms of church government and the accumulation of wealth by the religious orders, together with the invocation of saints, the use of

bells, banners, and relics, oaths, and other observances, which the Lollards vehemently opposed as anti-Christian.

Pecock's loyal defence of the hierarchy, and of established forms and ceremonies, failed to excuse or redeem other features of his work, which excited the anger and dismay of the appointed guardians of doctrine and discipline. It was evident to these censors that he had conceded far too much to the Lollards, to whom he paid a notable compliment by granting that the English Bible, which, but for Wyclif, had never existed, is 'much delectable and draweth the readers into a devotion and a love to God and from love and deinté of the world; and ye have had hereof experience upon such readers and upon their now said disposition.' Even this, however, was less offensive to the orthodox than Pecock's rationalism, and, from his own point of view, he did not improve matters by a supplementary work which he called a *Treatise on Faith.* Confident in his own powers of persuasion, he roundly stated, 'the clergy shall be condemned at the last day if, by clear wit, they draw not men into consent of true faith otherwise than by fire, sword, and hangment,' but he did not deny that, when the resources of logic and argument were exhausted, such methods were legitimate. Thus Pecock endeavoured to be fair to both parties, whilst employing an instrument of conviction acceptable to neither. The dry light of reason was abhorrent to imaginative enthusiasts; and, in the same measure, stern judges who had delivered many a heretic to the flames, were moved to indignation at the advocacy of a criterion which rendered the most necessary traditions precarious and uncertain, especially as Pecock was understood to cherish scant respect for the authority of the Fathers.

Those were days in which such a *rôle* as the tolerant bishop essayed was simply not to be played. The chasm

he sought to bridge was too wide, and, in attempting to span it, he himself fell into the abyss. His main contention in favour of making reason the judge was answered by an Austin friar, one John of Bury, in a tractate called *Gladius Salomonis*, or The Sword of Solomon; but a more serious consequence was an order from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Bourchier, requiring him to submit his books to a council of four-and-twenty divines. As might be expected, their decision was adverse, and Pecock was forced to make his election between public recantation of his errors and the fiery purgation of the stake. The learned bishop was indisposed needlessly to sacrifice his life in a new quarrel, and, as his pacificatory aim had been frustrated, decided to immolate his writings. Accordingly on December 4th, 1457, arrayed in episcopal robes and accompanied by several of his order, he presented himself at St. Paul's Cross, and before an immense concourse openly abjured his opinions and others that were imputed to him, and placed his folios and quartos in the hands of the executioner, who committed them to the flames.

Formal recantation.

Pecock's troubles, however, were not ended by this indignity. He was deprived of his see, and, not only of his see, but of his freedom, the Abbot of Thorney being appointed his keeper with strict injunctions as to his treatment. It is clear that he was regarded as a 'dangerous person,' for his lodging was a 'secret, closed cell'; writing materials were forbidden him, and the only books granted to him, as a solace in his captivity, were a breviary, a Missal, a Psalter, a legend, and a Bible. Provision also was made whereby he might have sight of an altar and hear an occasional Mass. By such means it was hoped that the fallen prelate might be reclaimed from his intellectual pride and brought into humble submission to the Church, whose councils and doctors he had handled with

less than customary veneration. How long he supported this imprisonment we do not know; he passes out of our ken degraded, immured, forgotten.

When moderate men like Pecock not only failed to influence the ruling classes, but expiated their liberality of sentiment by a doom not much better than death itself, the prospects of reform might well appear dark. The terrors of the law were terrors indeed, and in order that men might be induced to confront them, heroic example was necessary. It was offered by Martin Luther, whose dauntless defiance of Rome came as a challenge to a nation whose hatred of Popery was, in general, rather political than religious, but was none the less sincere and deep-rooted, and, one may say, traditional. There was also a strong leaven of Lollardry in the land, and the Catholic bishops were taught that, by their bloody policy of exterminating revenge, they merely sowed dragon's teeth whence sprang a new crop of adversaries not less resolute and considerably more learned. It is true that the lesson availed them nothing, and the Protestants themselves very imperfectly comprehended the virtue of toleration.

William Tyndal.

The initiative in this fresh phase of the struggle was assumed by a man of a genial and unaggressive temper, who had learned to admire both Luther and Erasmus without perhaps fully appreciating the difference between the personal qualities of the leaders and the ultimate tendencies of their intellectual activity. This was William Tyndal, a native of Gloucestershire, born about 1484, and educated first at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, where John Colet still lingered, and afterwards at Cambridge, in which university he appears to have come under the influence of Erasmus and acquired a knowledge of Greek.

About 1519 he returned to his county in the capacity

of tutor to the sons of Sir John Walsh, of Little Sodbury. However, he was not to remain much longer obscure. A translation of Erasmus' *Enchiridion*, which maintained the superiority of a true Christian life to the dry formularies of the schools, was an early proof of his theological leanings, and, as soon as it became known, must have drawn the attention of his neighbours on the unflinching scholar, whose championship of Luther grew so pronounced that he was cited before the Chancellor of the Diocese of Worcester and admonished. The warning fell on deaf ears, for in a later bout of controversy he boldly remarked to a Worcester divine, 'If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost'—thus re-affirming the old Lollard belief in the free circulation of the Bible, which, in the prevailing conditions, the Catholic rulers of the Church held to be productive of heresy and schism.

Translation of Erasmus' *Enchiridion*.

A person who nourished so revolutionary a design was evidently out of place in the provinces, bickering with country parsons, and in the autumn of 1523 Tyndal transferred his quarters to London, where he preached on several occasions at St. Dunstan's. His immediate object, however, was to procure, through the interest of Sir Harry Guilford, a friend of Walsh, an appointment as chaplain to the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstal. This application, especially in view of what happened afterwards, was ill-advised. Probably Tyndal was led to make it in consequence of the praise bestowed on Tunstal in the writings of Erasmus, but Luther's sharp reply to Henry VIII, who had created the Bishop of London Keeper of the Privy Seal, was not calculated to further the project of an avowed disciple of the German arch-heretic; and so, one is not surprised to find, the plan miscarried.

The prelate's gates being closed to him, Tyndal accepted the hospitality of a rich London draper, one Humphry Monmouth, with whom he stayed six months, busy day and night with his version of the New Testament. Though he lived the quietest of lives, he was made to realize, as he himself has said, 'not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's Palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England.' Accordingly, he proceeded to Hamburg, where he could breathe more freely, advance his knowledge of Hebrew, and obtain sympathy and support for his undertaking.

The New Testament in English.

After about a year's residence in Hamburg Tyndal removed to Cologne, and, in all secrecy, began to print his translation of the New Testament in quarto. The edition consisted of three thousand copies, but only one copy, and that imperfect, has come down to us. Of a second issue of three thousand copies in octavo, which was printed at Worms almost simultaneously, there remain two copies, one of them fragmentary. The work was carried out under manifold difficulties, chiefly through the machinations of Luther's antagonist, Cochlaeus, who, having scented what was in progress, kept the English Government and the Papal Curia duly informed, and finally set in motion magisterial authority, by which means he arrested the first attempts at printing and necessitated the translator's flight to Worms.

But this was not all. Tyndal had also to battle with a very intractable coadjutor in William Roy, already referred to as a satirist (see vol. i, p. 147). This old Cambridge man and Minorite friar Tyndal characterizes as 'somewhat crafty,' and the collaboration between them seems to have been a matter quite as much of mutual advantage as of devotion to the cause. 'As long as he had gotten no money,' says his chief, 'somewhat I could rule him; but as soon as he

had gotten his money, he became like himself again. Nevertheless, I suffered all things till that was ended which I could not do alone without one both to write and help me to compare the texts together. When that was ended, I took my leave, and bade him farewell for our two lives, and, as men say, a day longer.'

Through the efforts of the English merchant adventurers, at whose expense it had been published, copies of the translation in March, 1526, were introduced into England. The consequences might have been foreseen; within a few months the version was publicly condemned. The task of denouncing it fell to none other than Cuthbert Tunstal, the Bishop of London, who in the autumn of 1526 preached at St. Paul's Cross a sermon in which he computed its errors at over three thousand, and then piles of copies were religiously burnt. Henry VIII also, who just then was engaged in a lively controversy with Luther, accused him of aiding and abetting 'one or two lewd fellows born in this realm' in corrupting the sacred text and promoting 'abominable heresies' by means of glosses and paraphrases. And he mentioned that, acting on the advice of the Cardinal Archbishop of York, he had determined on the burning of copies and the punishment of persons who read them, or retained them in their possession. Yet other steps were taken to prevent the propagation of the work. Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, bought up all the copies he could lay hands on; and in March, 1528, Sir Thomas More was licensed to study heretical literature in order that he might supply an antidote.

Controversy with More.

This resulted in the publication of a dialogue known as *Quod he and quod I*, in which one of the speakers professed to give a report of an interview with More on the subject of images, the invocation of saints, pilgrimages, and so forth. The

author affirms his belief that a correct translation of the Scriptures would be for the interest of the English people, but repudiates Tyndal's attempt with its newfangled and insidious terms 'elder,' 'congregation,' 'repentance,' in lieu of the time-honoured and orthodox expressions, 'priest,' 'church,' and 'penance.' In 1530 Tyndal composed, and in 1531 published, *An Answer unto Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, arguing that by the word 'church' had come to be understood 'nothing but the shaven flock of those that shore the whole world.' More responded with his *Confutation*, in which he defined his position as a champion of the church which others were assailing, and unworthily defended the principle of heretic-burning. This he represents as a painful necessity, which might have been obviated, at any rate in great part, had the bishops been more on the alert. Happily, in spite of John Foxe and Jesus' Tree, More's practice was better than the theory he here expounds, but of that and much else anon.

Last days.

All this while Tyndal was leading a wandering life on the Continent, dogged by agents of the English Government, and constantly menaced with danger and persecution. From Marburg he passed to Antwerp, and from Antwerp to Marburg, thence to his old residence, Hamburg, and afterwards once more to Antwerp. Nevertheless and none the less, he followed with zealous pertinacity the work he had set himself—namely, the translation of the Old Testament, in which he was assisted by a sturdy Yorkshireman, Miles Coverdale. The Pentateuch appeared in 1531, and after this first instalment Tyndal proceeded with the historical books, getting as far as the end of the Second Book of Chronicles when his labours were interrupted by a death that was tragic in the extreme.

In 1535, whilst he was the guest of Thomas Pointz, an

English merchant residing at Antwerp, the latter had occasion to attend an important fair. Advantage was taken of his absence to arrest Tyndal, who for a long while was kept a prisoner at the Castle of Vilvorde. At last, having been sentenced as a heretic under a decree of the emperor, he was strangled and burnt at Vilvorde, 6th October, 1536, after he had uttered the prayer, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes.'

Tyndal's Bible.

Tyndal's principal achievement was his translation of the Bible. This, not Wyclif's, is the foundation of our present English versions, whether authorized or revised, both of which may be said to be lineally descended from it; and therein lies its immeasurable significance. It was once the custom to speak of Tyndal's translation as if it were little more than Luther's Bible in English, but this mode of regarding it involves much unfairness. He certainly knew and compared Luther's version, but, so far as the New Testament is concerned, based his translation on the original Greek text as edited by Erasmus, with the help of the same scholar's Latin rendering, which undoubtedly exercised a more potent influence on his interpretation than Luther's *Uebersetzung*. Relatively to these moderns the Vulgate and Wyclif hardly count.

Tyndal was specially indebted to Luther for marginal references and glosses, and incorporated more than half of his short preface in his own. In this he discusses the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which is the subject of three other disquisitions, outwardly independent, but, as regards their contents, not much more than paraphrases and expansions of the German reformer's statement. Tyndal accepted Luther's favourite doctrine, though not with slavish literalness, but departed from him in his view of the Lord's Supper, which he sets forth in two little treatises, and which approximates to Zwingli's more cate-

gorical belief. Tyndal is too discursive to rank as a master of thought, or a model of prose, and but for the force of conviction with which he addresses himself to his various themes, would soon lose his hold on the reader. As it is, such an essay as *The Obedience of Christian Man* will well bear perusal as a pronouncement against the false Popery, which he hated, and a plea for order and subordination in the family and the state. But his capital performance was his translation of the Bible.

Coverdale's Bible.

We have now to outline the developments of Bible translation following upon Tyndal's initiative. His own version evidently left something to successors, inasmuch as it was incomplete, and as Roy apparently loved lucre more than pains, Tyndal's mantle alighted on his later collaborator, Miles Coverdale, who experienced a far kindlier fate than that of his master. At home all sorts of things were happening. Henry had broken with the Pope, Cranmer had been appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, and Latimer, who was for 'restoring the liberty of reading the Holy Scriptures,' Bishop of Worcester. Naturally there was still a strong party opposed to this concession, but a vote was carried in convocation, authorizing the change of policy, and Thomas Cromwell busied himself with seeking a version of the Bible exempt from obnoxious features. It chanced that not long before, Miles Coverdale had finished a translation of the whole Bible, based upon five separate interpretations, and this Cromwell presented to the bishops for examination. They reported that it was faulty, but not heterodox, and the king thereupon gave commandment that it should 'go among the people.' Accordingly, in 1536, the first printed copies of Coverdale's version arrived in England, where the same year Tyndal's translation of the New Testament was issued with a native imprint.

Matthew's Bible.

In 1537 was published a second complete version of the Bible, by Thomas Matthew, consisting of Tyndal's translation of the New Testament, and of the Old Testament so far as he had gone with it; Coverdale's translation of the other canonical books of the Old Testament revised by the editor, and a new translation of the Apocrypha, for which Matthew was alone responsible. As has been noted, Tyndal's version was open to sundry objections in the eyes of those who, though they had rid themselves of the Pope, had no thought of abandoning the old order, but in spite of that, Cromwell recognized its merits, and commissioned Coverdale to revise it in such a way as to render it eligible for general use. The work, thus purged and corrected, was printed at Paris, appeared in 1539, and became known as Cromwell's, or the Great, Bible. In a similar manner, and under identical auspices, Matthew's version was overhauled by Richard Taverner, and republished in 1539. Next year

Cranmer's Bible.

was issued the most important of this series of revisions, Cranmer's Bible, which was founded on Tyndal's version, carefully collated with Greek and Hebrew originals, and to which was prefixed a prologue by the Archbishop. This was appointed to be read in churches, and remained the authoritative English version till 1568. In one sense it still retains that character, since the Psalter, as printed in the Book of Common Prayer, formed part of it.

In saying that Cranmer's Bible remained authoritative until 1568, we, of course, purposely ignore the reign of Queen Mary, during which the practice of Bible-reading was sternly discouraged. But interest in the Bible and its due and proper translation could not be extinguished by official severities, and in Switzerland a little band of exiles, indifferent to any *via media*, and Puritan to the core, gave

eager support to the production of yet another version—the Geneva Bible. The translator of the New Testament was William Whittingham, a brother-in-law of Calvin, who, by way of preface, contributed an expository epistle 'declaring that Christ is the end of the Law.' Whittingham used Erasmus' text, but compared with it other manuscripts to be found at Geneva. In the translation of the Old Testament, which was made direct from the Hebrew, he was assisted by resident English scholars, who did not forsake their task until it was brought to completion four years after the death of Mary. This version is noteworthy as being the first containing the division of the text into verses. It was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, who was exhorted to follow the example of Josiah by slaying all, both men and women, small and great, who refused to seek the Lord. This unchristian advice was destined to recoil on themselves, but it is conceivable that, had the decision rested with the English commons, the Marian fires would have been much more terribly avenged.

The Geneva Bible.

The history of the Geneva Bible itself affords confirmation of this theory, since it was by far the most popular of the translations of the Scriptures circulating during Elizabeth's reign. Eighty-five editions were published in all, and of these, sixty, or over seventy per cent., were editions of the Geneva Bible. In consequence of ecclesiastical interference, the great majority of them were printed abroad. In 1561, John Bodley (father of Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of the Bodleian Library, Oxford), at whose expense mainly the work had been originally produced, applied for and obtained a patent conferring upon him a monopoly, which in 1566 he was anxious to renew. An extension of twelve years was accorded him, but subject to his acceptance of a clause arranging for the control and

supervision of the work by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. Bodley declined this condition, and Parker and his colleagues thereupon resolved on a version of their own, which should supersede Cranmer's and be wrought 'in such perfection that the adversaries can have no occasion to quarrel with it.' As some guarantee that this would be the case, Parker himself undertook the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, and the Epistles of St. Paul, together with the first two books of the Old Testament. The rest of the work was distributed among a number of colleagues, a large proportion of whom were bishops. Hence the name by which the translation is commonly known—the Bishops' Bible. One significant circumstance may be mentioned, namely, the alteration of the term 'congregation,' a legacy from Tyndal which Cranmer had seen fit to retain, to 'church.'

The Bishops' Bible.

The final acts, the fullest phases, of the translation of the Bible do not concern us here, but there are kindred topics that may not be passed over untouched. Just as by its Latinity the Vulgate masked from the vulgar the comprehension of the Holy Scriptures, so also the mass-book and the breviary were the runes of the learned clergy. The sermon alone was free and 'understanded of the people,' and the message of the pulpit was liable to neither check nor criticism except from those same priests whose science was so deep a mystery. The Reformation changed all that. The prayer-book disclosed to the poorest and most ignorant the nature of the petitions which were offered in their behalf, and in some of which they were invited to join. The Bible being now open, the words of the preacher were subjected to tests of fidelity, standards of orthodoxy, and a rigour of judgement hitherto not known or not tolerated in the book or its readers. As has

been frequently remarked, the Anglican Reformation was essentially a compromise which sought to preserve whatever was valuable in the traditions of the Church, whilst rejecting those accretions which had been proved by experience not merely superfluous, but hurtful. The acute and permanent division of opinion between the moderate section of the community, which determined the character and extent of the changes, and the enthusiasts and extremists, who by their fortitude and constancy had brought the Reformation within the scope of practical statesmanship, necessitated the delicate adjustment of points of doctrine and a wise and worthy choice of expressions so as to conciliate that large body of Englishmen which had not definitely committed itself to any party. which leaned to conservatism and sober commonsense, and whose chief incentive to reform was patriotism—that particular species of national feeling which took the shape of hostility to Rome. Fortunately in the Church of England there were scholars and divines adequate to the memorable crisis; and if the soundness of their rulings as to Christian teaching has often been impugned, the noble dignity, the singular grace and unrivalled felicity of their style and diction have never been seriously challenged, and have usually commanded the fervent admiration of critics, both good and bad.

The First *Book of Homilies.*

The first *Book of Homilies*—there were twelve in all—was published in 1547, and 'appointed by the King's Majesty to be declared and read by parsons, vicars, or curates every Sunday in their churches where they have cure.' The work was superintended by Archbishop Cranmer, who himself wrote five of the homilies. It is not quite certain which, but it is thought that he was responsible for the discourses on Salvation, Faith, and Good Works, and, perhaps also,

those on the Fear of Death and the Reading of Scripture. Taverner's *Postills* (an old term for sermons) supplied the homilies on the Passion and the Resurrection, while that on the Misery of Mankind was by John Harpesfield. Latimer wrote the sermon on Brawling and Contention, and Latimer's friend, Thomas Bacon, contributed the essay on Adultery. The object of the compilation was of course to ensure uniformity of preaching; but frequent repetition must have tended to monotony, and this was one of the reasons why in 1563 a second *Book of Homilies* was issued, although in the opinion of Grindal and others a better remedy would have been greater latitude in the utterance of original discourses.

The First and Second Service-books.

In 1549 an Act for Uniformity of Service was passed, and a Book of Common Prayer in the English tongue—the First Service Book—was ordered to be used in churches on and after the ensuing Feast of Pentecost, *i.e.* June 9th. This earliest version of our prayer-book was a typical product of the English Reformation, inasmuch as it was formed out of the old liturgies, with certain omissions designed to content the advocates of reform. It did not differ materially from the book now in use, the principal distinction being that the Morning and Evening Services began with the first reading of the Lord's Prayer. Being an experiment, of necessity it did not escape criticism. Questions were raised in Parliament and Convocation, and in the autumn of 1550 a Second Service Book was commenced. The changes then introduced were in the direction of a more pronounced Protestantism. The general confession and absolution inserted at the opening of the Morning and Evening Services were tacit denials of the Roman doctrines of auricular confession and priestly absolution, and the significance of the additions is not lessened by the fact that

these elements of public worship were borrowed from the service-book prepared for the French refugees at Glastonbury by a Calvinist, Pullain. Other features which distinguished the new liturgy belong rather to ecclesiastical history than to the study of literature; and the same observation applies to the second revision accomplished in 1569, in which anti-papal sentences were toned down or eliminated. For instance, the clause in the Litany, 'From the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, good Lord deliver us!' was wisely expunged.

It may be remarked in passing that the less truculent sort of Anglicanism which came in with the accession of Elizabeth was adverse to the fortunes, both personal and political, of the root and branch reformers, and even of such comparatively moderate and inoffensive persons as Miles Coverdale, whose conscience would not suffer him to subscribe to the proceedings of the dominant party. Bishop of Exeter under Edward VI, he was deprived of his see in Mary's reign, and although one of the four divines to whom letters patent were issued by Queen Elizabeth for the consecration of Matthew Parker as Archbishop of Canterbury, he was not restored to his diocese, and was, in fact, neglected until, in 1562, he was presented to the living of St. Magnus, London. In 1564, the High Court of Commission enforcing 'unity of apparel,' Coverdale and other 'precise brethren' were compelled to relinquish their preferments. He died in 1567 at the age of eighty.

John Jewel.

The English Reformation engendered a swarm of pamphleteers, but the only authors to whom we need pay particular notice are three in number, Hugh Latimer, John Foxe, and John Jewel, to whom may be added the Scottish reformer, John Knox. Departing from chronological order, we will deal

first with the third on our list, because his work was more or less complementary of the proceedings to which we have just referred. Born in 1522 at Berrynarbor, near Ilfracombe, Jewel received his early education at Barnstaple Grammar School, afterwards proceeding to Oxford, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1540, and formed a close friendship with Peter Martyr. When Mary ascended the throne, this intimacy proved his undoing, since he was driven from his college and required, as public orator, to draw up congratulatory addresses to the queen on her reversal of Edward's enactments, as well as to subscribe to doctrines opposed to his beliefs. Unable to bear this treatment, he went to Germany, where he met with a kind welcome from his former acquaintance, Peter Martyr. On the death of Queen Mary he returned to England, was employed as one of the commissioners for securing uniformity of Public Worship, and appointed Bishop of Salisbury.

Apology for the Church of England.

In 1562 Jewel's famous *Apology for the Church of England* was issued by the queen's authority. The work was an authoritative statement of the Anglican position in relation to Rome, and set forth the rise and heretical nature of the doctrines which the English Church had definitively rejected. Addressed *urbi et orbi*, a document of capital importance—it was with considerable propriety written in Latin; but there soon appeared a translation executed by Lady Anna, wife of Sir Nicholas Bacon, with an epistle by Parker, to whom, as well as to Jewel himself, the manuscript had been submitted.

It is not to be supposed that in those days of religious excitement the publication of such a work would pass unheeded by those whose interests it assailed; but the flame was kindled not so much by the solemn Latin pronouncement as by the bishop's subsequent remarks in English.

In 1560 the Bishop of Salisbury preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross, in which he offered to become a Roman Catholic if any one of the twenty-three points urged by him in favour of the Reformation were confuted. The gage was accepted by two zealous Romanists, Henry Cole and Thomas Harding, the latter of whom attacked, not one point only, but all, in his *Answer to Master Jewel's Challenge*, published in 1564, and supplemented the following year with a *Confutation of a Book entitled An Apology for the Church of England*. Jewel responded with a folio volume, *A Reply unto Mr. Harding's Answer, entitled a Confutation*, etc.; and Harding, in 1566, retaliated with *A Rejoinder to Mr. Jewel's Reply*, which drew forth another folio from Jewel, and that a *Second Rejoinder* from Harding. In 1568 the bishop published a *Volumen Alterum*, and, as if there had not been enough and to spare of controversy, Harding rushed once more into print with *A Detection of Sundry Foul Errors* in his opponent's *Defence of the Apology*.

The theological feud told on Jewel's health. In order to carry it on successfully, he curtailed his hours of sleep, going to bed at midnight and rising again at four. As the sad result he died in 1571, aged fifty. His antagonist, who had likewise been educated at Barnstaple School and Oxford, expired a year later at Louvain. In 1609 Jewel's writings were collected into a single folio, in which form they constitute a striking memorial of his talent and erudition. As an apologist, he is certainly inferior in balance and profundity to the 'judicious' Hooker, but his works have the unique interest attaching to the expositions of one of the earliest fathers of the English Church, and their ample armoury can still furnish weapons wherewith to combat the exaggerated pretensions of the Church of Rome. In this connection it may be noted that Jewel's *Defence*

of the Apology for the Church of England was required to be set up in churches for the use of the people.

A few years later a similarly energetic duel was waged between John Whitgift for the establishment, and Thomas Cartwright on behalf of the disappointed Puritans. Both were very able men, but it is hardly worth while to trouble ourselves with the details of this second war of words. Far more profitable is it to turn to the life and labours of men like Hugh Latimer and John Foxe, whose productions were, in one sense or another, written in fiery characters and reek of the stake.

Hugh Latimer.

Latimer was born about 1491 at Thurcaston in Leicestershire, where a house near the church, built in 1568 on the site of a still older edifice, is called after his name. Of his parentage and youth he has left charming and frank descriptions, which it would be criminal not to quote.

My father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own, only he had a farm of three or four pound by year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had a walk for a hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able and did find the King a harness, with himself and his horse, while he came to the place where he should receive the King's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went unto Blackheath field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the King's Majesty now. He married my sisters with five pound or twenty nobles apiece, so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours. And some alms he gave to the poor, and all this did he of the said farm.

If Latimer went to school, he was no less scrupulously trained in manly exercise:

In my time my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot as to learn any other thing, and so I think other men

did their children. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, but with strength of the body. I had my bows bought me according to my age and strength. As I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger, for men shall never shoot well except they be brought up in it. It is a goodly art, a wholesome kind of exercise, and much commended in physick.

In 1505 he was sent to Clare Hall, Cambridge, where he obtained a fellowship before taking his degree, which he did as Bachelor of Arts in 1510, and Master in 1514. Of his life at this time he has furnished us with the following little anecdote:

There was a merry monk in Cambridge in the college that I was in, and it chanced a great company of us to be together intending to make good cheer and be merry, as scholars will be merry when they are together. One of the company brought out this sentence, *Nil melius quam laetari et facere bene.* There is nothing better than to be merry and do well. 'A vengeance of that *bene*,' quoth the monk, 'I would that *bene* had been banished beyond the sea, and that *bene* were out. It were well for I could be merry and I could do, but that *bene* mars altogether.'

When twenty-four years of age Latimer was ordained priest, and in another digression he tells us of his anxiety to mix sufficient water with the wine at the office of the Mass. He says of himself generally at this period: 'I was as obstinate a Papist as any in England.' At thirty he graduated Bachelor of Divinity, when his theme was an attack on the anti-Papal views of Melanchthon. He was converted to the side of the Reformers by 'little Bilney.' For a time his position was one of some peril, but his convictions had not yet hardened into a firm, unwavering acceptance of the new principles, and so timely submission to Wolsey dissipated the charge of heresy. However, he

was known to his friends as no great friend of Romanism, and when Henry VIII fell out with the Pope, was summoned to preach before that monarch, who, in 1530, appointed him his chaplain, and in the following year presented him to the living of West Kington, Wiltshire. Here his 'heretical' preaching gave offence, and he was cited first before Stokesley, the Bishop of London, and then before Convocation, after which he was excommunicated and imprisoned. Latimer again submitted and was again absolved. Probably Stokesley was the bishop who, as he afterwards mentioned, objected to his use of the term 'Lord's Supper.'

In 1532 Cranmer, a friend of Latimer, was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and on 5th October, 1534, Latimer himself was elected Bishop of Worcester in succession to a non-resident Italian, who, in accordance with an Act of Parliament passed in that year, had been deprived of his see. Five years afterwards, Henry induced a complaisant Parliament to enact a measure abolishing diversity of opinions and requiring all Englishmen to embrace, on pain of death, six Articles in favour of transubstantiation, auricular confession, vows of chastity, celibacy of the priests, private Masses, and lay communion in one kind only. This 'whip with the six strings' Latimer could not accept; accordingly, he resigned his bishopric, and was placed in the custody of the Bishop of Chichester, who treated him with respect and consideration. Latimer had little expectation of escaping the last penalty, but was merely 'commanded to silence.' This silence was protracted till the King's death in January, 1547, when Cranmer became one of sixteen regents, and the Duke of Somerset, who had before secretly sympathized with the Reformers, and now publicly espoused their cause, Lord Protector.

It was a fortunate conjuncture for Latimer, who was allowed to quit the Tower, and on 1st January, 1548,

preached at St. Paul's Cross his first sermon since his committal. Parliament, also, would have restored him to his bishopric, but Latimer had other views, and elected to remain in the metropolis as a public preacher. His most famous discourse is, perhaps, that *On the Ploughers*, delivered in the 'shrouds' of St. Paul's. By 'ploughers' Latimer signified the clergy, and he did not except the bishops from his honest reproaches and telling and scornful denunciations. Indeed, the tradition of 'unpreaching prelates' is represented as the chief reason why the plough tarries. Another feature of the sermon is its strong Protestant tone. As a specimen of Latimer's homely, yet pungent and vigorous, style of address may be quoted the following passage on the Devil as a prelate:

On the Ploughers.

> There is one that passeth all the other and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you. It is the Devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other, he is never out of his diocese, he is never from his cure, ye shall never find him unoccupied, he is ever in his parish, he keepeth residence at all times, ye shall never find him out of the way. Call for him when you will, he is ever at home, the diligentest preacher in all the realm. He is ever at his plough; no lording or loitering can hinder him. He is ever applying his business; ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kind of popetry. He is as ready as can be wished for to set forth his plough, to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory. Where the Devil is resident and hath his plough going, there away with books and up with candles; away with Bibles and up with beads; away with the light of the gospel and up with the light of candles—yea, at noondays, etc.

Hardly, if at all, inferior in interest are the Seven Sermons preached before King Edward VI, of which the Princess

Elizabeth also was an auditor. These sermons are colloquial, and, in places, one must also say, gossipy. From them have been taken the foregoing recollections of his younger days, and here, likewise, we meet with allusions to his present mode of life at Lambeth Palace, where he was residing with Cranmer:

The Seven Sermons.

> I cannot go to my book, for poor folks come unto me desiring me that I will speak that that their matters may be heard. I trouble my lord of Canterbury, and being at his house, now and then I walk in the garden looking in my book, as I can do but little good at it. But something I must needs do to satisfy this place.
>
> I am no sooner in the garden and have read awhile, but by and by cometh some or other knocking at the gate. Anon cometh my man and saith, 'Sir, there is one at the gate would speak with you.'

The last and greatest of the septette was delivered during Lent 1550. Latimer, who felt that he had not long to live, and would never be seen in 'this place' again, uttered his *ultimum vale* in an appeal to the King for an order for marriages in England. He then set out for Lincolnshire, where he continued till the close of Edward's reign. In 1552 he preached seven sermons on the Lord's Prayer before the Duchess of Suffolk at Grimsthorpe Castle, and these with twenty-one sermons 'preached in Lincolnshire' were published ten years later through the instrumentality of his faithful secretary, Augustus Bernher, whose good services were rewarded in the days of Queen Elizabeth with a rectory.

Latimer's heroic death is so well known as to be almost a household tale. In mid September, 1554, he was conducted, in pursuance of Mary's relentless policy, to the Tower, where the next day he was joined by his venerable friend, Archbishop Cranmer.

Death at the stake.

The following March, the two old men, with Nicholas Ridley, the Bishop of London, were transported to a jail at Oxford; and a month later Latimer was put on his trial. The hearing took the form of a theological browbeating, which, as Latimer knew only too well, could have but one issue. He was too old and weary to argue with his judges, and therefore he merely intimated that he stood by his beliefs. On 16th October, 1555, he and Ridley were bound to the stake, at Oxford; and as the pile was kindled for his fellow, Latimer uttered the memorable words, 'Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.'

Character of the Sermons.

In considering Latimer's sermons two facts must be borne in mind—first, that they were not produced as literature or with a view to anything save immediate and practical effect; and, secondly, that they were extempore discourses taken down by others and published by them. Thomas Somes, one of those who reported Latimer's sermons, remarks: 'And let no man be grieved, though it be not so exactly done as he did speak it, for in very deed I am not able to do so, to write word for word, as he did speak. That passeth my capacity, though I had twenty men's wits and no fewer hands to write withal.'

Despite this and similar avowals, we may be fairly confident that the reports, imperfect as they are, comprise the essential Latimer. His personality stands out distinct and impressive, and Somes is not far out in describing him as a prophet appointed by God to 'our most noble King and our realm of England.' A shrewd observer of his countrymen, whom he taxes with degeneracy, Latimer spared no man and no station, greatly scorning the advice of an important personage to humour the King in all things. His discourses

render it plain that the growth of the national wealth had been coincident with a marked increase in luxury and lessened consideration for the poor, of whom Latimer was always a firm friend and protector. On certain points his sermons have a definite historical value, and throw light on the economics of the period, but these features are insignificant compared with the testimony borne by them to the spirit and aims of the Reformers, and the simple, yet noble character of the man himself. Wise and pithy sayings are sown plentifully through these fragments, and there are passages of natural eloquence that explain the eager multitudes that hung upon his lips, and that drew their inspiration from honesty of conviction and intensity of spiritual feeling. That there were good men on the other side, and that Protestants persecuted in the day of their power, does not alter or impair the circumstance that in the brave and gifted son of the soil, Hugh Latimer, the Reformation in England begot a protagonist whose virtues suffice to redeem all its imperfections and are a noble heritage for the English race.

John Foxe.

From the martyrs we turn to the martyrologist, John Foxe, who was born in 1516 at Boston, in Lincolnshire. When a child he lost his father, and his mother married again. His relations were too poor to be able to do much for him, but his love of study attracted the goodwill of two friends, one of them a Fellow of Brasenose, who assisted him to go to Oxford. In 1537 he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and two years later was elected to a Fellowship at Brasenose, his original college having been Magdalen. In 1543 he proceeded M.A. Latin plays on Biblical subjects and the study of Hebrew and the Greek and Latin Fathers formed his principal occupations until the year 1545, when he was charged with heresy, and gave up his Fellowship rather

than assent to take holy orders within seven years of the date of his election, with the consequent obligation of celibacy.

Tables of Grammar.

Foxe now obtained a situation as tutor to the son of Sir William Lucy of Charlecote, near Stratford-on-Avon, and the lad whose education he superintended was none other than the future Sir Thomas Lucy of Shakespearian fame. In 1547 he married Agnes Randall, and we next find him in London, where his services were engaged by the Duchess of Richmond, sister of the unhappy Earl of Surrey, as tutor to her brother's children. For five years he resided in this capacity at Reigate Castle, where his pen was employed on theological tracts, and he wrote a school-book called *Tables of Grammar*, which was published in 1552.

Then came the death of King Edward, when the old Duke of Norfolk, who, unlike his daughter, was a strong adherent of the Roman Catholic religion, was released from prison and at once discharged the heretical inmate of his castle. England being no longer a safe country for men of his persuasion, Foxe made his escape to Strasburg, where his first attempt at a martyrology, a Latin octavo, dealing with the tragic fates of Reformers from the time of Wyclif, was published by a printer named Wendelin Richelius for the Strasburg Fair in 1554. During the same year Foxe was at Frankfort, and, in a contention among British refugees, sided with Knox in preferring Genevan forms of prayer to the English liturgy. In November he betook himself to Basel, and there gained a meagre livelihood for himself and his family as a corrector of the press. In 1556

Christus Triumphans.

his employer, Johann Herbst, who rejoiced also in the Graeco-Latin cognomen Oporinus, was complaisant enough to publish for him his Latin mystery-play *Christus Triumphans*. Meanwhile he de-

termined to proceed with his accounts of the martyrs. As he had an assured, though none too lucrative post in Switzerland, he remained there a whole year after the accession of Elizabeth, and, on the advice of his friend Grindal, postponed the publication of his *magnum opus*, pending the acquisition of fresh facts, which were certain, in the altered circumstances, to come into his possession.

Foxe's *Book of Martyrs.*

In October, 1560, Foxe returned to England, and at first took up his abode at Aldgate in a manor place of his former pupil, the Duke of Norfolk, who had succeeded his grandfather in his title and estates but not in his faith, to which all the moral pressure of Gardiner had failed to bend him. Foxe's interest at this time was wholly concentrated on his literary undertaking, and he paid regular and constant visits to John Day's printing-house, where his book was being set up in type. At length, in 1563, the first English edition appeared in folio and bearing the title *Acts and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Days*, etc. Foxe cannot be termed an impartial historian. The great persecutions and horrible torments wrought and practised by the Romish prelates from the year 1000 had left too vivid an impression on his mind, had been burned too deeply into his soul, to admit of dispassionate writing, which had it been possible, would have seemed little better than affectation and hypocrisy in one who had been a spectator of the inhuman cruelties inflicted on his friends, or had received first-hand descriptions of them. Out of piety to these victims of bigotry, Foxe could have but two aims—to confirm his countrymen in their present attitude towards Romanism, and convey to generations yet unborn some portion of his own horror and detestation of such brutal measures of repression.

But if Foxe was not impartial, he was industrious, and he was accurate. He cites authentic documents, he gives

chapter and verse of the records he has consulted, and, although Roman Catholic scholars have the strongest reasons for controverting statements so damning to their church, and lovers of their kind would fain believe them to be exaggerated, the truthfulness of the work has never been successfully impeached.

Mere words, however, were not enough. Reading was not then a universal accomplishment, and accordingly Foxe took good care to adorn his book with copious woodcuts, in which martyrs were depicted in a posture of devotion amidst tongues of flame. These grim pictures spoke for themselves, they needed no gloss, and when, as was done by authority, copies of his work were placed in the churches —sometimes, as at Winsham in Somerset, near the seats of honourable families, members of which had perished for conscience' sake—they probably did more to prevent a repetition of the scenes than the Bible itself. Some of these ancient black-letter volumes are still to be found in remote parishes, and where that is not the case the local historian can often testify that once upon a time Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs' was a treasured ecclesiastical heirloom.

One good deed of Foxe must not be overlooked. Believing that the Reformation was rather the restoration of an ancient order than the introduction of a new, he made a careful study of Anglo-Saxon and induced John Day to publish the Gospels in Old English. He died in 1587.

John Knox.

John Knox is better known as a man of action than a man of letters, and we shall therefore dispense with a biographical notice of a life too rich in incident to be adequately recorded here. It has been said of Knox that he was not merely an active agent, but *the* agent of the Reformation in Scotland. This, we believe, is widely recognized, but the fact is far less

generally known that he was also the historian of the movement—a circumstance to which Milton alludes in the *Areopagitica*. Four books of the history were published in their author's lifetime, and a fifth, said to have been 'gathered out of Knox's papers and manuscripts,' was added in 1644 by David Buchanan, who must not be confused with the more famous George Buchanan, Knox's contemporary and friend. The four original books extend from 1527 to 1564, and the fifth carries on the record to 1567, the year in which the Earl of Moray was appointed Regent.

Of Knox's other publications, mainly of a devotional or theological cast, it is needless to say much, but mention must be made of his furious and almost fanatical *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, which was succeeded by a *Second Blast*, in which he pursued the same line of argument against the elevation of females to positions of authority. Three Marys were the *bêtes noires* of these philippics—Mary of Guise, Regent of Scotland; Mary Queen of Scots, and Mary of England. He is kinder to Elizabeth, whom he likens to Deborah, questioning, moreover, whether she have 'such empire as our monsters claim.' But although he admits the possibility of exceptions, his blasts, on the whole, are uncompromising diatribes, supported by citations from Aristotle and the Fathers. Some of the passages are deliciously quaint, as for instance the following apostrophe: 'Beware, Chrysostom, what thou sayest. Thou shalt be reputed a traitor if Englishmen hear thee, for they must have my sovereign lady and maitresse, and Scotland hath drunk also the enchantment and venom of Circes.'

CHAPTER II.

ROMANCES AND NOVELS.

The march of Prose.

The dominant note of the period between Chaucer and Spenser is the development of prose, which is no longer confined to works of serious import, but freely applied to all classes of literature. Of the works referred to in the previous chapter most, if not all, would probably have been written in prose, whatever the date of their production, though in earlier ages they would doubtless have been formulated in Latin. This remark will not hold of the majority of the writings which will now come within our purview, for as we see by such examples as Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle*, to name only one instance, verse was deemed a suitable medium for recording idealized versions of past events, which were hardly regarded in that light, and eventually shaped themselves into annalistic accounts of actual and recent events. This singular state of things is explicable, partly by the force of precedent and convention, partly by the practice of recitation in days when books were few and readers fewer, and partly by the circumstance it was easier to write verse than prose, when prose was an art crude, infantile, and backward.

The great instrument in bringing about the general adoption of prose in the case of subjects for which it was manifestly better suited, was the printing machine, leading

as it did to the multiplication of books and superior facility in reading. In its inception, however, the change was independent of mechanical improvements and closely identified with the early Renaissance in Italy. The *Decameron*, perhaps, as much as any other work, set the fashion, but the democratic constitution of the little Italian states, with its inevitable accompaniment of popular oratory, was one of the ultimate factors in the making of the *Decameron* and of modern prose. A book is not enough in itself; it must have appreciative readers if it is to make an epoch.

As early as 1440 an Arthurian romance, *Merlin*, appeared in English prose, but meanwhile rhyming romances continued to be popular and were produced in large numbers. The *Soldan of Babylon, Sir Ferumbras, Roland and Ferragus, Sir Otuel, Sir Ipomedon, Octavius, Lybeaus Disconus, Launfal, Sir Isumbras*—all these favourites, with many more, were in metre. The time, however, was approaching when the ambition of authors and publishers was to produce collections of these old-world stories no more as songs, but in prose. Such enterprise is indissolubly associated with the name of the first English printer and publisher, who was an editor and translator.

William Caxton.

William Caxton was a native of Kent, a county of whose brogue he speaks without flattery. The year of his birth is uncertain, but may have been 1421 or a little later. He received a good education, and was apprenticed in 1438 to a mercer named Robert Large, who in the following year was Lord Mayor of London, and who died in 1441. Caxton then went abroad, and, except for occasional visits, remained out of England for thirty years. He made his home at Bruges, where he rose to be Governor of the English merchant adventurers. The last mention of Caxton as 'Master Governor' occurs in 1469. The Duchess of Burgundy at this time was Mar-

garet, sister of our Edward IV, and with her Caxton seems to have been brought into somewhat close relations, which had a decisive influence on his after career. On March 1st, 1469, he commenced to translate *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*, but did not persevere with his task. Two years later it was resumed at Margaret's command.

There are various ways of regarding Caxton—the technical, the bibliographical, the literary. We may discuss his presses, his founts of type, the formats and bindings of his books, or the principal works written or edited, projected and published by him. Here we propose to limit ourselves to the third aspect of the subject as alone sufficiently apposite to our aim and compassable in our space.

The *Recuyell.*

Caxton's first essay in literature was, as we have seen, his translation of the *Recueil des Histoires de Troye*, a set of mediaeval Troy tales reduced to prose in 1464 by Raoul Le Fèvre, a chaplain of Philip, Duke of Burgundy. A good many copies of this translation were made by the old process of writing, the cumbrousness of which drew Caxton's attention to the new and brilliant invention of printing, and so, he says, 'I learned to ordain this book in print at my great charge and expense.' The *Recuyell*, to preserve Caxton's spelling of a word which has not taken root in English, was not only the first book to be printed in his native tongue, but marked a fresh departure in prose. French prose had then, and in the opinion of many has retained, an easy superiority over the prose of other nations, especially in the vital quality of lucidity, and the virtues of the original, if not reproduced, were certainly reflected in the translation.

From the *Recuyell* Caxton turned to another work, which for his purposes was also French, since he translated the *Game and Play of Chess*, not from the *Liber Moralis de*

Ludo Scaccorum, but from French versions of the treatise, the object of which was to mend manners rather than to make chess-players. In 1476 he came to England, where the earliest work printed by him here, and probably anywhere, was the *Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers*, translated by Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers, from a French book entitled *Les Dits Moraux des Philosophes*, which Caxton was commissioned to 'oversee,' and to which he added a prologue and epilogue, both distinguished by engaging candour and charm. Neither Rivers nor his editor had the least sympathy with Knox's prejudice against women, and the former entirely omitted Socrates' sayings in their dispraise. Caxton, however, did not approve of this method, and to satisfy all parties, 'and also for excuse of the said Socrates,' relegated these impolitenesses to a coign by themselves at the end of the book. Another work of Rivers printed by Caxton was his *Cordial, or The Four Last Things*, translated from a French book by Jean Mielot. From, or rather through Mielot also, came the *Declamation of Noblesse*, translated by the Earl of Warwick, who Englished Cicero's *De Amicitia* from the French version of Laurent de Premierfait. But the extent to which English prose was indebted to the literature of other countries can be illustrated quite as conveniently by the translations for which Caxton himself was alone responsible.

Game and Play of Chess.

Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers.

Various.

One of these was *Reynard the Fox*, the original of which was a Low German *Hystorie van Reynaert die Vos*, a famous beast-fable, which was represented also in French romance. This was published in 1481. Three years passed, and then Caxton gave to the press an entire English version of Jacobus de Vora-

Reynard the Fox.

gine's *Legenda Aurea*, or *Golden Legend*, with additions by Jean de Vignay. As the prologue states that he had a copy in Latin, it is probable that he depended in some measure on the original, but he had a copy in French and a copy in English, both of which he unquestionably turned to account. The latter, based on Vignay's revision of an earlier French translation by Jean Belet and published about the middle of the fifteenth century, was found by Caxton to be imperfect, and this discovery prompted him to form out of the three variants a comprehensive English version of these lives of the saints.

The *Golden Legend.*

From the French he translated three romances, *The Four Sons of Amon*, *Blanchardyn*, and the *Eneydos*, dedicating the second to the Lady Margaret, Duchess of Somerset, mother of Henry VII. The most interesting of the trio, as well as the most important, is, however, the third, of which he observes:

Encydos.

> I sitting in my study whereas lay many divers pamphlets and books, happened that there came to my hand a little book in French, which lately was translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France, which book is named Eneydos, made in Latin by that noble poet and great clerk, Virgil. . . . And when I saw the fair and strange terms therein, I doubted that it should not please some gentlemen which late blamed me, saying that in my translations I had over-curious terms, which could not be used of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations.

These remarks point to a weakness in Caxton as a translator, of which his version of *Reynard the Fox* had already supplied striking evidence. That is to say, he sometimes transcribed, rather than translated, a fault easily explained by his long residence abroad. For the same reason he, in some degree,

Style of translation.

lost touch with his mother-tongue, which, as he shows, had undergone radical changes during his own lifetime. Between the old and the new English he found it impossible to satisfy everybody, and took the wisest course open to him by aiming at a compromise:

> In my judgment the common terms that be daily used be lighter to be understood than the old and ancient English. And forasmuch as the present book is not for a rude uplandish man, but only for a clerk and a noble gentleman that feeleth and understandeth in feats of chivalry, in love, and in noble chivalry: therefore in a mean between both I have reduced and translated this said book into our English, not over-rude ne curious, but in such terms as shall be understood, by God's grace, according to our copy.

The book was, in fact, dedicated to Prince Arthur, eldest son of Henry VII.

It is not in all points the Virgil that we know, being taken from the French prose version, *Le Livre des Eneydes*, in sixty-five chapters, tinted with the hues of chivalry; and, although Caxton boldly offers it to the criticism of scholars, especially Master John Skelton, it was scarcely fitted to sustain the ordeal. Indeed, we have seen with what majestic scorn it was treated by Gawin Douglas, to whom it was the veriest makeshift.

Caxton rendered a notable service to English literature by his editions of our early classics, such as the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis*, but it is needless to attempt a complete inventory of his publications. Those to which we shall presently refer will be discussed not merely on account of any fortuitous connexion with him, but in their own right.

Like the year of his birth, the year of Caxton's death is uncertain, but may be given conjecturally as 1491.

Dame Juliana Berners.

The works of Dame Juliana Berners, if that was her name and those were her works, may be dismissed very briefly. In the colophon of the first edition of the *Book of St. Albans* the name is 'Dam Julyans Barnes,' which has the appearance of a misprint, and may well have been an error. The lady is reputed to have been the daughter of Sir James Berners, who was beheaded in 1388, and born at Roden-Berners, in Sussex. She is further stated to have been Lady Prioress of Sopwell, not far from the Abbey of St. Albans, in which the works attributed to her are said to have been first printed in 1486. And, according to tradition, she was alive in 1460. Unhappily, all these assertions are of very doubtful authenticity; and we can only note that the Dame Juliana of fact or fiction was a devoted herald and a no less ardent sportswoman. The writings with which she is credited comprise a *Lineage of Coat Armour*, a *Blazing of Arms*—avowed to be a translation—and *Books of Hunting and Hawking*, which were largely translations; the *Venerie de Twety*, a treatise of the reign of Edward II, being freely requisitioned. With the exception of the *Book of Hunting* the pieces are in prose, and the *Book of Hunting*, whatever its form (and we do not dispute its rhyming) is not exactly what we should call poetry. Nevertheless, the works possess some value from their bearing on the life of the English nobility in an age fast passing away; and their interest would be quite extraordinary could we be sure that they are the genuine productions of a sporting prioress, fit companion for the jovial abbots whose love of the chase was then, and has since, been made so grave a reproach to them.

[1] It is worthy of remark that, at the moment of going to press, we have received the prospectus of a fine edition of the hitherto unprinted *Master of Game*, translated from the French of Gaston

The *Morte d'Arthur.*

Of all the works printed and published by Caxton none can compete in general attractiveness with Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, or *Book of King Arthur and of his Noble Knights of the Round Table.* Who was Sir Thomas Malory? It is not too much to say that the generality of scholars have given up the problem in despair or assumed a merely tentative attitude with respect to it. Mr. Sidney Lee, for instance, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, though mentioning four families of the name in the Midlands, is unable to connect the author of the *Morte d'Arthur* with any of them. An American critic, Mr. George Lyman Kittredge, has discussed the matter very fully in a contribution to Vol. V. of *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, and not only does he seem to have lighted on the right person, but he supports his conclusion with arguments calculated to convince the most sceptical. According to his almost certain reasoning, the writer of the *Morte d'Arthur* was Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, of Newbold Revell (or Fenny Newbold), who was M.P. for Warwickshire in 1445, and died March 14th, 1470, when, says Dugdale, he was "buryed under a marble in the Chappell of St. Francis at the Gray Friars, near Newgate, in the Suburbs of London." As a young man he served in France under Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, styled by the Emperor Sigismund the 'Father of Courtesy,' and he probably witnessed his gallant leader's remarkable feat at Calais, where he met and unhorsed three French knights in succession at a 'great gathering.'

Bred to arms under a captain of Beauchamp's matchless quality, Sir Thomas possessed one of the chief requisites

Phebus (Froissart's patron) between 1406 and 1413, by Edward, Second Duke of York. The work is edited by W. A. and F. Baillie-Grohman, and has a foreword by President Roosevelt.

for handling anew the Arthurian romances—namely, fine sympathy with the chivalrous ideals they enshrine. Mr. Kittredge has proved to demonstration that there is absolutely nothing in the circumstances to preclude the Warwickshire knight from being the author of the *Morte d'Arthur*, and unless and until evidence is forthcoming to rebut his seemingly strong claim, he must be considered to 'hold the field.'

There appears to be not the slightest foundation for the idea that Sir Thomas Malory was a Welshman, and, as has been suggested, a Welsh priest, although the title 'Sir' was at that time not infrequently accorded to parsons. At the close of the work he describes himself as a knight, and if the passage breathes the language of devotion, piety has been in no age the monopoly of the clergy. The whole theory of Malory's Welsh extraction would seem to repose on an inaccurate remembrance of a statement of Bale, for which Leland is quoted as an authority, to the effect that 'Malory is a region on the borders of Cambria.' It is likely enough that the name Malory is territorial, but this admission is far from establishing a Welsh nationality for our author. Although the notion has a *prima facie* probability arising out of the fact that Arthur was a ruler of the Ancient Britons, neither Malory nor his editor gives any hint that the former came of the same stock as his hero, or derived his knowledge partially from Welsh sources, whether the vernacular literature or oral traditions. Caxton's statement that 'many noble volumes be made of him [*i.e.* Arthur] and of his noble Knights in French, which I have seen and read beyond the sea, which be not had in our maternal tongue, but in Welsh be many, and also in French, and some in English, but nowhere nigh all,' can hardly be interpreted in that sense. The reference is too casual and indistinct. Moreover, he continues:

Wherefore such as have been lately drawn out briefly into English, I have, after the simple cunning that God hath sent to me, under the favour and correction of all noble lords and gentlemen, emprised to print a book of the noble histories of the said King Arthur and of certain of his Knights after a copy unto me delivered, which copy Sir Thomas Malory did take out of certain books of French and reduced into English.

This shows that, at any rate, the bulk of the writings consulted were of French origin; but Dr. Sommer, after a patient comparative study of Malory's sources, has inserted in his magnificent edition of the *Morte d'Arthur* lists of the exact works on which he has reasons for believing the several portions are based; and to these the reader may be referred.

In the prologue, from which the above citations have been taken, occurs also an interesting account of the inception of the undertaking—by Caxton.

After that I had accomplished and finished divers histories, as well of contemplation as of other historical and worldly acts of great conquerors and princes, and also certain books of ensamples and doctrine, many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England came and demanded me many and oft times wherefore that I have not done, made, and printed the noble history of the Saint Graal and of the most renowned Christian King, chief of the three best Christian and worthy, Arthur, which ought most to be remembered among us Englishmen before all other Christian Kings.

Having mentioned that the two others were Charlemagne and Godfrey of Boulogne, whose lives he had published, Caxton proceeds:

The said noble gentlemen instantly required me to print the history of the said noble King and conqueror, and of his Knights, with the history of the Saint Graal, and of the death and ending of the said Arthur, affirming that I ought rather to print his

acts and noble feats than of Godfrey of Boulogne or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man born within this realm, and King and Emperor of the same; and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his acts, and also of his Knights. To whom I answered that divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books that be made of him be but feigned and fables, because that some chronicles make of him no mention, ne remember him nothing, ne of his Knights. Whereto they answered, and one in special said, that in him that should say or think that there was never such a King called Arthur, might well be aretted (*accounted*) great folly and blindness; for he said that there were many evidences of the contrary. First ye may see his sepulchre in the monastery of Glastonbury; and also in *Polychronicon* in the fifth book, the sixth chapter, and in the seventh book the twenty-third, where his body was buried and after found and translated into the said monastery. Ye shall see also in the history of Boccaccio, in his book *De Casu Principum*, part of his noble acts and also of his fall. Also Galfridus in his British book recounteth his life, and in divers places of England many remembrances be yet of him, and shall remain perpetually, and also of his Knights. First in the Abbey of Westminster on Saint Edward's shrine remaineth the print of his seal in red wax closed in beryl, in which is written 'Patricius Arthurus, Britanniae Galliae Germaniae Daciae Imperator.' Item, in the castle of Dover ye may see Gawain's skull and Caradoc's mantle; at Winchester the round table; in other places Lancelot's sword and many other things. Then all these things considered there can no man reasonably gainsay but here was a king of this land named Arthur; for in all places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthy, and the first of the three Christian men.

Malory's work, which must have occupied several years, cannot have been written for Caxton, since it was completed in 1470, at which time Caxton was at Bruges, and apparently had no printing-press of his own. It was first published in 1485, so that it is perhaps not unfair to conjecture

that the gentlemen who importuned Caxton to issue a history of King Arthur, were cognisant of the existence of Malory's manuscript. Whether the printer ever ascertained the precise use that Malory made of his authorities, cannot be stated; but he certainly speaks as if he thought of him as a mere ordinary compiler and translator. This is entirely to misconceive Malory's place in literature. He had at his disposal a vast mass of writings of varying merit, and, had he been inclined, could no doubt have selected from them a sequence of stories sufficiently entertaining, and, as Caxton puts it, reduced them into English without much alteration in either language or sentiment. But this is just what Malory did not do. He was a creative artist, and instead of translating the compositions of other men, chose for himself the much more arduous task of elaborating an original work impressed with the stamp of his own sympathetic genius. In other words he reconstructed for himself the world of romance portrayed in his work, studied in their lights and shadows the actors of the story till they lost their merely traditional or emotional character, and became real to him; and, when it came to writing, digested the chaos of material into a well-ordered system according to a preconceived plan. We do not affirm that his monumental achievement was carried out with a perfect adaptation of the parts, or so as to leave no trace of the process of compilation by which the contents were formed into a comprehensive yet determinate whole. But these irregularities, though occasionally perplexing, and producing a sense of something unfinished and disjointed, count for little beside the total impression of a powerful and gracious personalty, presiding over a huge and highly complex mechanism, the purpose and principle of which are manifest, and which usually works with perfect smoothness and accuracy.

Malory owes much to his style, which is genial, unobtru-

sive, dignified, rich in feeling, and clear in expression. It is, in the best and truest sense, poetical prose—not the sort of prose that poets often write, cumbrous, conscious, constrained, but such as a scholar might well employ as a model, say in translating Homer. Malory was essentially a poet, who adopted prose simply because the fashion of the day was setting in that direction. The charm of his language is always felt, always potent, and triumphs over the monotony inseparable from the recital of unending combats.

A feature which lends considerable animation to his narrative is the constant tendency to run off into dialogue; and this is a symptom of the dramatic instinct which is one of Malory's strongest characteristics. There are twenty-one books, and the fatal germs which will fructify after many days in the catastrophes recorded in the last are discernible in the first and the third. Arthur is at the outset a doomed man—doomed by the mystery of his parentage and youth, and the ignorance that aggravates an early sin; doomed on account of his marriage with Guinevere, against which he is warned, but warned in vain. The *Morte D'Arthur* is, therefore, tragedy without its forms.

Ascham's severe verdict.

As we have intimated, the fall and passing of Arthur are preceded by numberless encounters which heighten the tragic quality of the work, at any rate in the estimate of some, and rendered it distasteful to Ascham, that watchful guardian of youth, who refers to it as a book, 'the whole pleasure of which standeth in two special points, in open manslaughter and bold bawdry, in which book those be counted the noblest knights that do kill most men without any quarrel and commit foulest adulteries by subtlest shifts . . . What toys the daily reading of such a book may work in the will of a young gentleman or a young maid that liveth

wealthy and idly, wise men can judge and honest men do pity.'

This is surely a libel on the *Morte D'Arthur*, inasmuch as it takes account only of certain aspects of the work, which are morally faulty, and entirely ignores such episodes as the quest of the Holy Graal and the sifting of the pure knights from those tainted with worldliness and sin. Nor is it correct to imply that the fighting which constitutes so large an element of the book is mere purposeless slaughter, since the victims are for the most part justly punished for their crimes. Where that is not the case, the influence of that chivalrous institution, the tournament, is plainly apparent. We may condemn joustings as unnecessary and barbarous exhibitions; but to those who promoted them they had the crowning justification of training men to the uttermost limit of disciplined courage, and the exaltation of this virtue—the corner-stone of all human society—is conspicuously one of the chief aims of the *Morte D'Arthur*.

Another merit of the knights of the Round Table is their courtesy. In this connection we note that Malory displays his independence by depriving Gawain of the primacy in this virtue, which passes to Launcelot. In the older versions he is Gawain the 'hende,' but as Malory depicts him, he is disfigured by a certain rude fierceness not characteristic of his order, and that does not consist with the highest ideals of knighthood.

The great blot of the book is undoubtedly its want of respect for the sanctity of marriage. There Ascham is right; and the sentiments of many would have been better propitiated, if instead of spiritualizing his guilty passion for Guinevere, Launcelot had been made to marry Elaine, the mother by him of Galahad. But that would have been to re-arrange the whole web of fate, nor, when Arthur is translated, is morality baulked of some measure of satisfac-

tion, for the lovers do not, availing themselves of the opportunity, consummate a profane union, but spend the residue of their days in penitence and retirement.

Italian novels.

In the same passage in which he passes so severe a censure on Malory, Ascham delivers himself of a yet sterner condemnation of the craze for Italian novels, observing that 'ten *Morte Arthurs* do not the tenth part so much harm as one of these books made in Italy and translated in England.' He adds: 'That which is most to be lamented, and therefore more needful to be looked to, there be more of these ungracious books set out in print within these few months than have been seen in England many score years before.' This innovation is in the main identified with the literary activities of William Painter, and important not only as a sign of the growing interest in the lighter, and, it must be allowed, looser class of Continental writings; but from the influence of such translations on the work of Elizabethan dramatists, who drew plots from them, as from a well-stocked magazine.

Arthur Brooke.

The herald of the new movement was Arthur Brooke, who, in 1562, or two years before Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, composed a metrical version of the 'tragical history' of Romeo and Juliet, described on the title-page as 'written first in Italian by Bandell.' This is true enough, but Brooke made use, not of the Italian original, but of a French adaptation, which he altered and amplified. Some years later appeared Painter's version of the tale in prose. It was, however, on Brooke's rhyming narrative that Shakespeare's play was founded, as is proved by sundry echoes. For instance, the lines:

> 'Art thou,' quoth he, 'a man? Thy shape says so thou art;
> Thy crying and thy weeping eyes denote a woman's heart,'

are paraphrased in the far more virile and vigorous rendering:

> Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art;
> Thy tears are womanish.

William Painter.

However, Brooke makes a slight and insignificant figure beside William Painter, who was born in Middlesex—we do not know in what year. He was admitted as a sizar at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1554, and in 1591 is twice characterized by his son as 'aged.' These are the sole indications by which we can fix the date of his birth, and they are not only extremely vague, but hardly admit of being reconciled. If Painter was eighteen—and he may have been younger—when he entered the university, he would have been only fifty-six in 1591, and this is not what would now be understood by the expression 'aged.' Of his career at Cambridge we know but little. He was appointed clock-keeper to his college, and elected a scholar on Lady Margaret's foundation, but his name is not inscribed in the register of graduates, although he probably took a degree, since he afterwards gained a livelihood as master of a school at Sevenoaks, in Kent. He was ordained deacon by the Bishop of London on April 25th, 1560, but appears to have relinquished all thought of preferment in the church on his appointment in the following year to the office of clerk of the Great Ordnance in the Tower. This post he continued to hold till his death.

Painter's wife was Dorothy Bonham, of Cowling, and by her he had five children. He lived near the Tower, but contrived to purchase two manors, those of East Court and Twydall, in the parish of Gillingham, and the former was occupied, whilst he was yet in the flesh, by one of his sons. It is to be regretted that, as a public official, Painter was

guilty of peculation, and it was doubtless with the money thus wrongfully obtained that he bought the aforesaid manors.

Upon his death, which seems to have occurred soon after February, 1594, when he was 'very sick' and made his will, he was rated a debtor to the Crown to the extent of seven thousand eight hundred pounds, which large sum was repaid in part by his descendants, the balance being remitted to his grandson by a formal discharge from James I in May, 1622.

William Painter's first contribution to literature consisted in a preface to his friend Fulke's Latin invective against astrology, published in 1560, which he translated in 1561, adding to it a 'short treatise' of his own. It seems, however, that during his schoolmaster days at Sevenoaks he had meditated a work of quite another description. Very modest in scope, it was to consist of no more than a selection of tales from Livy; and, since in 1562 he applied at Stationers' Hall for a license to print a book entitled the *City of Civility*, that was, no doubt, the work in question. This, as he points out, was merely the commencement. Already he was forming an ambitious plan, which advanced from stage to stage, from ancient to modern. First he determined to supplement his tales from Livy with others from the classics; and, when this had been done, he turned to contemporary Italian stories, which he translated either from the originals or from French versions that he deemed more elegant. The collection, published in two successive volumes, with the promise of a third which never appeared, was entitled the *Palace of Pleasure*, in deference to the opinion of 'Tully, the Prince of Orators,' that profit and pleasure are to be derived from the perusal of histories.

The *City of Civility.*

The *Palace of Pleasure.*

The accuracy of this judgement cannot be gainsaid, but it may be surmised that the title of the work had a reflex influence on its contents, and perhaps entirely accounts for the inclusion of so many 'novels of merry device,' which Ascham at any rate did not regard as profitable. The first tome of the *Palace of Pleasure*, published in 1566, consisted of sixty novels; the second, issued a year later, contained thirty-four. The earlier volume was reprinted in 1569, and again in 1575, when the text was thoroughly revised and five more novels were added. The later volume was also re-issued, but without date, and augmented by one story, thus completing the century of novels for the entire work. From the ancients came twenty-eight stories —five from Livy, two from Herodotus, three from Ælian, one from Xenophon, two from Quintus Curtius, thirteen from Aulus Gellius, and one from Plutarch; all the others had Italian originals, ten in the first and six in the second volume being borrowed from Boccaccio. Painter was under yet deeper obligations to Bandello, but despite the fact that no fewer than twenty-six of his novels were the productions of that excellent wit, treated him with gross discourtesy and ingratitude. One, indeed, in the first volume was taken direct from the Italian, but seven companions he drew from intermediate French versions, 'choosing rather to follow Launay and Belleforest, the French translators, than the barren soil of his own vein, who, being a Lombard, doth frankly confess himself to be no fine Florentine as the eloquent and gentle Boccaccio was.'

Sources.

Bandello died in 1562. Two years before, Belleforest and Launay, between them, had completed and published their *Histoires Tragiques*, containing eighteen novels of Bandello, which were utilized by Painter for his first collection. The second instalment of the *Histoires Tragiques*

appeared in 1565, and was turned to profit in Painter's second tome. Two more French volumes were published by Belleforest in 1568 and 1570 respectively, and would doubtless have furnished their quota to the Englishman's third book, the contents of which are foreshadowed in a notice at the end of the second volume. It was to include 'the remnant of Bandello, specially such, suffrable, as the learned Frenchman François de Belleforest hath selected, and the choicest done in the Italian. Some also out of Erizzo, Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, Parabosco, Cinthio, Straparola, Sansovino, and the best-liked out of the Queen of Navarre and other authors.'

Some of these writers were already old favourites of Painter. For example, Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, sometimes known as *Il Pecorone* (or The Blockhead), a fourteenth-century author, whose tales were printed at Milan in 1558, had supplied two stories. Two more were derived from Giraldi Cintio's *Hecatommiti*, or *Hundred Tales*. This writer did not die till 1573, and his book was published first in 1565 in Sicily, and afterwards, in 1566, at Venice. Straparola's *Tredici Piacevoli Notti* yielded one novel.

Geoffrey Fenton.

Painter's principal rivals in this department of letters were Geoffrey Fenton and George Pettie. The former distinguished himself in mature life—that is, after 1579—as Secretary for Ireland, and in 1589 received a knighthood for his services. He died in 1608 at Dublin. It is with the earlier portion of his career that we are concerned. In the year 1567 Fenton was lodging in Paris, and there he translated thirteen tales from Belleforest and Boaistuan, which he published in a volume dedicated to Lady Mary Sidney, and entitled *Certain Tragical Discourses Written out of French and Latin*. In point of fact they were one and all translated from the French, and four of them were Englished by

Painter, in whose second volume they appeared a few months later. We are thus in a position to compare the different methods of the translators. Painter took the tales as he found them and provided tolerably close renderings. Fenton, on the other hand, evidently aspired to out-Belleforest Belleforest, and re-touched the novels at his liking and discretion. He did not restrict himself to fiction, but undertook various translations of which brief mention will suffice. They included *A Discourse of the Civil Wars and Late Troubles in France* (1570); *Acts of Conference in Religion*, a 'disputation' between Papists and Protestants (1571); *Monophylo*, a treatise on love (1572); *A Form of Christian Policy* (1574); *Golden Epistles*, chiefly those of Guevara (1575, re-published in 1577); *An Epistle on Godly Admonition*, by Anthony de Carro, an appeal for concord addressed to the pastors of the Flemish church in Antwerp (1578); and, finally, Guicciardini's *History of the Wars in Italy* through the medium of a French version (1579).

George Pettie.

We now pass to George Pettie, whose life was as remarkable as the title of his book, which shows him to have been a wag. Born about the year 1548, he was the younger of the two sons of John Pettie, of Tetsworth and Stoke-Talmack, in Oxfordshire. He entered at Christ Church, where he was a student, and took his degree in 1570. After that he set out on his travels, and eventually became a sea-captain. He died at Plymouth in July, 1589, leaving his share of the patrimonial estates to his brother Christopher.

Pettie's collection of stories, printed by Watkyns in 1576, was curiously entitled *A Pettie Palace of Pettie his Pleasure* and commended—let us hope, by the publisher—as 'containing many pretty stories in comely colours and delightful discourses.' The tales were twelve in number, and they were both quaint and original. The names of the characters,

which supplied also the titles of the individual pieces, were classical, but there was nothing very classic in the treatment of the narratives, which were in fact based on the newest Italian fashions, and, under cover of Greek and Latin pseudonyms, frequently describe the amours of real persons. Not less striking is Pettie's literary style, which exhibits a notable predilection for antithesis and alliteration, and forestalls many of the extravagances of Lyly, who, in the opinion of Dr. Koeppel, may be regarded as, in nearly every sense, his disciple. Pettie translated from the French three books of Guazzo's *Civil Conversation*, originally an Italian work, from which, in its first form, Bartholomew Young, translator of Montemayor's *Diana*, drew an English version of the fourth book.

Addenda.

A book of tales published about this time, but not of equal importance with those above-mentioned, bore the title of *Strange, Lamentable, and Tragical Histories*. These were translated from the French by R. S. (*i.e.*, Robert Smith), and printed in 1577. Barnaby Rich's *Dialogues between Mercury and an English Soldier* (1574), and H. C.'s *Forest of Fancy* also contained elements of fiction.

CHAPTER III.

THE RENAISSANCE IN PROSE.

The age between Chaucer and Spenser produced some eminent writers on civil polity, whose works, not being over-burdened with technicalities or rigorously systematized, may be read not only for the instruction they contain, but for their charm. The earliest of these publicists was Sir John Fortescue, whose birth-year, like that of so many of his great contemporaries, is shrouded in mist. We know, however, that he came of an ancient and noble house, whose founder, Richard le Fort, is said to have interposed his shield between the Conqueror and death at the battle of Senlac, thus winning the proud motto, *Forte scutum salus ducum*, still displayed by his descendants. Fortescue's father, also a knight and also named John, was appointed Governor of Meaux, when that town capitulated in 1422; and his elder brother, Henry, at one time Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Ireland, was the ancestor of the two branches of the family of Fortescue, one of the most illustrious in Devonshire. The younger Sir John Fortescue's mother was a Devonshire woman, and it was on her estate at North Huish that the future jurist first saw the light. After a residence at Exeter College, Oxford, he joined, as 'Fortescue junior,' his elder brother at Lincoln's Inn, of which he was several times 'gubernator.' In Michaelmas term, 1430, he blos-

Sir John Fortescue.

somed into a sergeant-at-law, a dignity for which, as he himself tells us, a probation of sixteen years was required. Something else also was needed—namely, the disbursement of a sum amounting to at least two hundred and sixty pounds, multipliable by ten according to present value, and so prohibitory to poor men who might be ambitious of the honour. A few years later he married, his wife being Isabella, daughter of John James, of Philip's Norton, Somerset, by whom he had a son, Martin, and two daughters. Curiously enough, the three children married in three successive years, 1454, 1455, 1456. One of the daughters, Maud, being forsaken by her husband, retired to a nunnery at Helveston, in Bedfordshire, where she eventually died. Martin Fortescue died in 1471. Sir John himself survived not only his son, but his wife, and must have attained a great age. He was alive in 1476, and may have continued to live for several years, but about this we cannot be sure.

In the case of many a man this brief sketch would comprise all his history, but Fortescue was a great Englishman, whose life was closely intertwined with events of national importance, and whose writings derive no small share of their value from the wisdom and experience thus added to an intellect of rare natural acumen and commanding breadth of vision. Step by step he rose in the scale of judicial preferment. Judge of assize in 1440, King's Sergeant in 1441, and Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1442—so he advanced, and a knighthood followed as a matter of course. In 1443 he was a member of the commission appointed to investigate the disturbances at Norwich and in Yorkshire provoked by clerical cupidity, and thanked for his services by the Privy Council; and in 1447 he was received, with his wife, into the fraternity of the convent of Christchurch, Canterbury, for the express reason that he was, and was seen to be, a just man. As Lord Chief Justice, he was

exposed for one week to the fury of Jack Cade's following, but was no servile instrument of the Court, as was shown by his spurning the King's command to discharge a prisoner from Wallingford Castle. In practice as in theory he maintained the awe and authority of the High Court of Parliament, and probably inspired the reply of the Judges, when the two Houses fell out over the arrest of the Speaker of the Commons, in which they declined to arbitrate on the ground of the supremacy of the great council of the nation.

In 1457 Fortescue acquired the reversion of the manor of Ebrington, in Gloucestershire, which he was to forfeit by attainder and afterwards to regain.

Momentous events were now impending. The battle of Northampton in 1460, at which he was present, drove King Henry into exile, and Fortescue, his faithful servant, suffered with him. His estates were confiscated, and after the battle of Towton in 1461, he was superseded in his high office by Sir John Markham, his equal in integrity. The first years of his banishment were spent with the royal family in Scotland; and in 1463 he proceeded with the queen and ten year old prince to Lorraine, where the entire party lived 'in great poverty.' Meanwhile Fortescue employed all his arts to effect the restoration of the Lancastrian dynasty, and in 1470 the united efforts of Queen Margaret, Warwick the King-Maker, and Louis XI of France succeeded in realizing that consummation. Henry VI again occupied the throne of his ancestors. His triumph, however, was short-lived. On May 4th, 1471, the battle of Tewkesbury, in which Fortescue was taken prisoner, put a final term to the Lancastrian hopes; and as Sir John could do no more for his side, he saw no point in fantastic adherence to the dead cause of dead princes, and made his peace with the victors, who restored to him his possessions.

In their origin and design Fortescue's literary monuments were *pièces justificatives* written in support of claims to the English throne. Their wide and philosophic outlook, however, entitles them to higher consideration than would be due to them as mere transitory pleas and apologies; and although the earlier treatises are in Latin, this must be regarded in the light of an accident, and all three must be studied in conjunction in order to obtain full possession of Fortescue's theories, and some inkling of the stately intelligence which gave birth to them. Although the dates of the Latin writings are hardly to be fixed, it will be well to refer, in the first place, to his 'opusculum' *De Natura Legis Naturae,* which an allusion in the second treatise shows to have been earlier. The opening section is devoted to the inquiry, What is natural law? for on this hinges the immediate practical question of hereditary succession to the throne. As a corollary, he strikes out some important political distinctions, dividing rule in general into kingly rule, republican rule, and mixed kingly and republican rule—what we know as constitutional monarchy. His observations on these forms of government, especially the last, are significant as attesting the substantial agreement between the fundamental principles of English government which he recognized with those which we recognize to-day. It is true that he seems to throw more executive power into the hands of the sovereign, but this difference is, on the whole, more apparent than real, since the power then wielded by the king openly and directly is now exercised by his ministers, whose decisions, particularly in the field of foreign politics, he can and does influence to a degree which the nation has only lately begun to realize.

Natural Law.

It is an Asiatic state which is put forward as the ostensible theatre of the matter in agitation. The ruler having

died, three candidates present themselves at the bar of Justice and claim the succession. They are the dead monarch's brother, his daughter, and her son. The point to be determined is whether a female can inherit the sovereign power, or, failing that, whether she can transmit through her person a right which she is herself incapable of exercising. Both questions are decided in the negative, and the late ruler's brother is therefore pronounced to be the lawful heir.

The bearing of all this on the politics of the hour, not in Asia, but in England, is obvious at a glance, and it is absolutely favourable to the Lancastrian cause which Fortescue is there championing. He does this more explicitly in another Latin composition penned in Scotland, *De Titulo Edwardi Comitis Marchiae*, which may be found in the late Lord Clermont's privately printed edition of Fortescue's works.

We now come to the second of his great Latin treatises —that in praise of English law, or, preserving its Latin superscription, *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*. It is high testimony to the nobility of Fortescue's character that, instead of solacing himself by bitter attacks on the authors of his attainder and the forfeiture of his property, he should have bent the energies of his mind to the elaboration of a panegyric on the laws of his country, of which, in spite of all, he remained so dear a lover. A great part of the treatise is taken up with a comparison of the actual condition of the English people with that of their French neighbours, and on the principle 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' awards the palm with no uncertain voice to his own nation, whose contented and prosperous peasantry contrasted with the miserable helots of the sister kingdom, supplies incontestable proof of the superiority of the laws under which such

The Laws of England.

happiness is attained. Another point is the incorruptibility of the judges, a matter in which Fortescue, on historical grounds, has been charged with pardonable bias, but in view of his opportunities of learning, the general accuracy of his testimony cannot reasonably be impugned. In the same way the aggravation of the 'law's delay' in France must have forced itself upon him as the result of personal observation, and thus led him to prefer English judicial procedure.

The *Governance of England.*

Lastly, we approach Fortescue's great treatise *On the Governance of the Kingdom of England* (or *The Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy*), which is English not only in respect of its language, but by virtue of its severely practical aims and motives. In an ideal point of view the preceding work in Latin *On the Nature of Natural Law*, of which this is in some sense an offshoot, may be esteemed superior on account of its wider range, its greater fullness of learned allusions, but the two writings can hardly be said to compete. Fortescue has here taken upon himself a *rôle* different from any he had before essayed. He is no more a philosopher, save from necessity, no more a partisan, as from necessity, no more a mere patriot or jurist, but a veteran statesman desirous of conferring on his countrymen in a form readily understood the legacy of his mature conclusions on the true methods of advancing to a yet higher pitch the greatness and prosperity of England.

Writing after the sunset of his own cherished cause, in the sunset of his own day, he is fain to bind up the wounds inflicted by the Wars of the Roses, and to make of the national emblem a splendid reality. In order that this may be, he has to indicate certain cankers corroding the body politic, and suggest remedies. He points out as the principal source of national weakness the excessive power

of a greedy and factious nobility, before which the more legitimate power of the crown is reduced almost to a nullity. He would cure this subservience by instituting a council of twenty-four composed of the wisest and worthiest churchmen and laymen in equal proportion, aided by eight others, four of each class, who should be nominated by the king and hold the appointments for a year only, while the great officers of state, like the Chancellor, the Treasurer, and the Lord Privy Seal, should attend the sittings as of right. The Chancellor, indeed, is to preside at all meetings at which he is present, but there is likewise to be a permanent president chosen by the monarch out of his trusty twenty-four.

This remodelling of the executive is to be accompanied by a striking extension of regal wealth and magnificence, which must far surpass the state and show of any and every vassal. Fortescue, however, vehemently repudiates the notion that the king should aggrandize himself by impoverishing the commons, in whose well-being and contentment he finds his best ally. The only results of such impolicy would, he points out, be the shortening of the subsidies on which the monarch has to depend in time of need, and the infesting of the realm with thieves and robbers. The English, by reason of their boldness and independence, are, he admits, harder to govern than their neighbours the French, but the inconvenience has its compensations. One touch, which Fortescue probably did not intend to be humorous, but which to us is irresistibly comic, is the proof of the greater manliness of his compatriots to be found in the relative frequency of hangings for highway robbery. The French, he avers, are too timid to attempt anything of the sort unless the odds are decisively in favour of the marauders. Englishmen, on the other hand, boldly venturing on lawless deeds without

count of the risks, expiate their daring in great numbers on the scaffold.

Fortescue's other works are not so important, but they are important enough for cursory mention as showing his versatility, and as a revelation of the judge's character. Chapters of mediaeval history, Poggio's translation of Diodorus Siculus, Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, the lucubrations of St. Thomas Aquinas and Aegidius Romanus, and the *Compendium Morale* of the thirteenth-century Roger of Waltham—such were the subjects which at one time or another occupied his leisure and his pen. But more interesting and vital than any of these impersonal themes is his *Dialogue between the Understanding and Faith*, in which, we may rest assured, we have the very heart of the man. Fortescue's life had been one of continual vicissitude, and the question must often have occurred to him why in this world the righteous suffer, but, with serene trust in the goodness and wisdom of the Almighty Father, the knight surmounts all doubts and difficulties and temptations suggested by the Understanding and reposes with calm certitude in the arms of an unalterable Faith.

Sir Thomas More.

As Ten Brink observes, the Renaissance has not dawned for Fortescue, although he anticipates some of its features. In Sir Thomas More we meet with a character which may be regarded as the incarnation of the movement. Born in Milk Street in the City of London on February 7th, 1478, he was sent to St. Anthony's, a famous school in Threadneedle Street. Thence he was removed by his father, Sir John More, a knight of the King's Bench, to the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Morton, who was also Lord Chancellor, and now between seventy and eighty years of age. More's position was one of honourable service. He was a

page directly under the eye of the shrewd old prelate, who predicted a great future for him. 'Whoever liveth to try it,' said he, 'shall see this child here waiting at table prove a notable and rare man.' And John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, called young Thomas More, 'the one wit in England.'

From London the boy proceeded to Canterbury College, Oxford, thereafter incorporated in Christ Church, where Linacre and Grocyn taught him Greek; and then back to London—a student of Lincoln's Inn. About this time the religious young man was wearing a hair shirt and scourging himself on fast-days; but from the year 1500 onwards his principal study was the law, in which he became so proficient as to be appointed reader at Furnivall's Inn. But he did not neglect his old pursuits, lecturing on St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* at St. Lawrence Jewry, in the presence of his former teacher, Grocyn, the rector; and he probably had dipped deep into 'the well of English undefiled,' for, on the death of Queen Elizabeth of York, in 1503, he indited a set of Chaucerian stanzas dealing with that event, and ending one and all with the words, 'Lo! now here I lie.'

The following year More, being twenty-six years old, entered Parliament, where he distinguished himself by resisting and reducing by nearly three-fourths an exorbitant demand for the King's daughter, Margaret, on her marriage to James IV of Scotland, and thus drew upon himself King Henry's displeasure. It may have been partly, or wholly, for this reason, that he determined to quit the realm. This resolution he carried into effect so far as to visit Paris and Louvain in 1508, but he had many attractions to keep him in England. In the spring of 1505 he married Jane, daughter of John Colt of New Hall, Essex, though he loved her sister better, for the surely Quixotic

reason that he wished to spare the elder girl the pang of being passed over. At the close of 1505 a daughter, Margaret, was born to him; two other daughters, Elizabeth and Cecilia, were added in 1506 and 1507 respectively, and a son, John, in 1509. In 1510 his wife died, and, before the year was out, he married again.

Meanwhile, More was pursuing his career of many interests. In 1505 Erasmus stayed with him, and fired, no doubt, by the congenial companionship, the Oxonian translated into Latin three of Lucian's dialogues—his *Cynicus*, *Menippus*, and *Philopseudes*, and answered his declamation on tyrant-killing in one of his own. More himself was the reverse of grasping, and under the sway of our English tyrant, Henry VIII, ennobled a great success at the bar by refusing fees from widows, orphans, and poor people, and by declining to meddle with unjust causes. As Under-Sheriff of London, an office to which he was appointed in 1510, he pleased the citizens by his judgements; and in 1513 he, being still Under-Sheriff, is stated to have written his 'History of the Life and Death of King Edward V and the Usurpation of Richard III,' although one passage in it could not have been penned before 1514. This work, which was not printed until 1557, is not certainly original. It exists in two versions—Latin and English; and the Latin version has been ascribed to Morton, More's early friend and patron. At any rate, the history is throughout informed with what may be believed to be the cardinal's spirit and opinions, and from him the bulk of the information may have been derived. But we shall return to this topic later.

We have now arrived at the date of *Utopia*, but detailed reference to that work must be postponed, while we pass as rapidly as possible over the subsequent events of the author's full life. Treasurer of the Exchequer in 1520,

Master of the Requests and a knight in 1521, Speaker of the House of Commons in 1523, he was a prime favourite of Henry VIII, although More knew his world too well to put any confidence in princes. For a time, however, he seemed secure, and in 1528 was appointed by the King Chancellor of his Duchy of Lancaster. Of the treatise, humorously nicknamed *Quod he and Quod I*, we have already spoken. This was followed by a *Supplication of Souls*, a reply to Simon Fishe's Protestant protestation, *Supplication of the Beggars*, which drew from John Frith a rejoinder which More answered when Frith had suffered.

More was still advancing in the service of the state. In 1529 he and Tunstal, Bishop of London, represented their country at a meeting at Cambray, where, together with the ambassadors of the Emperor, the Pope, and the King of France, they set their seals to the famous treaty named after that town. The same year More succeeded Wolsey as Lord Chancellor, and was retained in that great office until May, 1532. He aided the King in his controversy with Luther by publishing, under the pseudonym 'William Ross,' a scornful, not to say scurrilous, reply to that 'nebulo miserrimus.' But it had been well for More had he left theology alone. When Henry broke with the Pope, and More refused to disown the spiritual authority of the head of Christendom, the enraged monarch actually taxed his Chancellor with having suggested those passages in his original reply to Luther respecting Papal supremacy, which More, on the contrary, had counselled him to modify or omit. However, it did not much matter. More was committed to the Tower, tried and condemned on a charge of high treason; and on July 1st, 1535, this most loyal servant of a most disloyal master was beheaded.

More is one of those few personalities on which one can look with a satisfaction almost, perhaps quite, unalloyed.

The greatness of More.

For one thing he presents a remarkable combination of the active and contemplative. Exclusive, or excessive, devotion to either practical concerns or abstract interests is bound to result in spiritual warping; in More we meet with an admirable balance of the qualities and faculties necessary to the conduct of mundane affairs and those that belong to the successful prosecution of philosophic and scientific inquiry. With these shining merits must be joined domestic virtues; never was there a better husband or more loving father than More, and one of the most pleasing episodes in his career was the painting of a family group in his country-house by Hans Holbein. It must be understood, then, that the characteristics revealed in his one undying work had their roots in the innermost nature of the man, and were displayed in every department of life in which he bore a part. The attempt to convict him of treason or truancy to his principles breaks down hopelessly. Thomas More is, in truth, the 'bright, particular star,' the richest, ripest fruit of the English Renaissance; and if we extend our outlook to the Continent of Europe, he may be classed as no unworthy yoke-fellow of the great Erasmus, who was proud to own him as a friend.

Utopia.

Although Englishmen are as proud of More as ever Erasmus was, still they recognize that he was meant for mankind—a fact that is proved by the exterior fortunes of his book. In the first place it was written in Latin—very attractive, limpid, liquid Latin—and ordinary English folk had no personal acquaintance with it till Ralph Robinson deemed fit to translate it for them in 1551. If the leaders of the Renaissance movement had a vice, it was that of confining their intellectual interests to those already qualified to share them—to the citizens of the Republic of Letters. Reuchlin is a typical

example of this detachment, and More, partaking of it in his degree, would not entrust his speculations to any vessel less precious than the language of Tully and Maro and Naso. As against this aristocratic or oligarchic sentiment must be set the appreciation of a common dialect as a means of communication between scholars of various nationalities, which razed the barriers of speech and space, replacing them by a generous bond of sympathy and a broad brotherhood of humanity.

We need feel no wonder, then, that the opening scenes of *Utopia* are laid at Antwerp, where More had an attached friend in Peter Giles, or Aegidius, secretary to the municipality, or that Erasmus was one of the several foreigners who lovingly superintended the printing of it. It was published first at Louvain in 1516. It was then revised by the author, after which Erasmus had it printed at Basel. In the meanwhile an English admirer caused the first edition to be reprinted in Paris. A fourth edition was issued in Vienna in 1519—this, too, being in Latin. These facts, and the lack of any English version until long after More's death, mark its place distinctly enough in the literature of the world; and, indeed, it was well fitted by its wide generalizations, its lofty aims, and profound wisdom, to appeal to a vast circle of readers.

More's *Utopia* may be described as a philosophic romance. As such it is a marvel of constructive genius, and it is not surprising that one worthy clergyman was so deluded that he was desirous of learning the longitude and latitude of the country, that he might fare thither as a missionary. Men's minds were then so confused that the improbability of a tribe of islanders in the South Pacific being tinctured with Greek did not impress them, as it would impress us; and at all times a deliberate statement occurring in a context apparently sober and sincere, is apt to throw people off

their balance, unless they are born sceptics, sworn to disbelieve every assertion, whether it may seem likely or the reverse. More's introduction is so natural that, although we know his account to be fictitious, it has, even for us, all the look of a genuine narrative. He sees his friend Giles talking to a sunburnt stranger with a long beard and a homely cloak cast about his shoulders, whom he guesses from his *savour* and attire to be a mariner. More is interested in this man, who turns out to be no common sailor, but a latter-day Ulysses, who has been a companion of Amerigo Vespucci, and voluntarily marooned, with three and twenty others, in the island of Gulike. Now something of the sort had actually happened, as appears from a passage in the *Quattuor Americi Vesputtii Navigationes*. That this Raphael Hythloday, however, was of the party, and that he heard and saw what is recorded in *Utopia*, is not to be supposed for a moment. Both the plan and the details of the work were mainly the invention of the ingenious More, who here delineates an imaginary and ideal state for the edification of European princes and politicians. In so doing he has borrowed hints from Plutarch's picture of ancient Sparta, and he has allowed himself to be influenced in some measure by Plato's castle-building in the Republic. But these obligations are not of much account. Plato and More attempted different things. The former, drawing perfect men in a perfect state, had a purely philosophic intent. His aim was to elaborate an idea, which might certainly affect, indirectly and insensibly, the action of statesmen, but, nevertheless, was not concerned with any immediate, practical, or realizable change in the practice or policy of rulers. More's treatise also partook of this character, and, indeed, to such an extent, that to this day the epithet 'Utopian' is applied *par excellence* to any well-meant scheme hopeless of execution under prevailing con-

ditions. But there is this difference, that while Plato tacitly renounced all expectation of educating human beings up to his standard of virtue, More, by the mere impact of violent contrasts between real and ideal, endeavoured to rouse his audience to a perception of the folly and cruelty which, in his time, were accepted as necessary routine. He tried to shame and shatter the canons of statecraft, as statecraft was then understood, by forcible and cogent lessons in the true objects of civilized government. His book was not exempt from elements of exaggeration, for the most part conscious and intentional; but this very circumstance left more room for compromise in directions in which all wise heads were now constrained to recognize room for improvement. The keynote of the whole is to be found in the following remarks of Hythloday:

> Therefore when I consider and weigh in my mind all these commonwealths, which nowadays anywhere so flourish, so God help me, I can perceive nothing but a certain conspiracy of rich men procuring their own commodities under the name and title of the commonwealth. They invent and devise all means and crafts, first how to keep safely, without fear of losing, that they have unjustly gathered together, and next how to hire and abuse the work and labour of the poor for as little money as maybe.

As a cure for this state of things, More would do away with money and make all work. Hating war, he would yet compel his fellow-subjects to prepare for it, in case it should be forced upon them; and, as regards religion, the prolific cause of war and civil strife, he would erect a state church based on three articles—the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and retribution after death. All forms of faith would be admitted, provided they were observed privately and without offence to the community. When we think of the Marian fires and the long centuries

that intervened before the principle of toleration in religious matters was adopted by governments, we begin to realize how far in advance of his age was Thomas More, how truly Christian he was, how truly great.

Sir Thomas Elyot.

More's house was a 'school,' which, as was remarked by a contemporary, more nearly resembled a university, and, as such, was thronged by scholars in both senses of the term—young aspirants to knowledge, and old and experienced professors yearning for sympathy in their loved pursuits. Amongst the number was Thomas Elyot and his wife, Margaret Abarrow. With the lady 'blue-stocking'—the word was not always applied to women only—we have no further concern, but her husband, as one of the most versatile and enlightened men of his age, makes a large claim on our attention. Born before 1490—we know not in what year—he was the only son of Sir Richard Elyot, who at the beginning of the sixteenth century was a judge of assize travelling the western circuit. Unlike most of the famous authors of the period, he appears to have had a wholly private education, being sent to neither school nor university, and, in the most important respects, he may be regarded as self-taught. The only hint of a contrary tendency is his statement that before he was twenty he studied Galen with a 'worshipful physician,' whom some suppose to have been Linacre. However that may be, the interest in medicine and hygiene thus implanted became a permanent 'obsession' of which the close of his life supplies evident token. It may be observed in passing that self-educated men—self-educated, that is, in the highest sense of that expression—are generally noted for the wide range of their attainments, and Elyot stands forth as an illustrious example of intellectual catholicism.

In 1515 he became clerk of assize in his father's circuit,

and ten years afterwards was Wolsey's nominee for the more dignified office of Clerk of the Privy Council. This, however, turned out to be a merely honorary post, no provision having been made for the payment of a salary. Luckily, Elyot was not a poor man. Three years before, the deaths of his father and a maternal relation gave him two manors in Cambridgeshire and Combe (Long Combe, as it is called at present), near Woodstock; and on the strength of these acquisitions he wedded the good lady above-mentioned. Elyot held the appointment of Clerk of the Privy Council for three years, when he retired, or was made to retire, not with a pension, but with a knighthood. After Wolsey's death he was despatched by his friend Cromwell on two important embassies to Charles V, in 1531 and 1535. On the former occasion the object was to secure the Emperor's consent to Henry's divorce from Katherine, while on the latter he heard from Charles's lips at Naples the sad tidings of the execution of Sir Thomas More. These public employments brought little grist to Elyot's mill, nor was it by any means at his own desire that he was appointed in 1544 High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire and Nottinghamshire. Two years previously he had represented the county in which he resided and had property, as member of Parliament. Elyot died on March 20th, 1546, at his house at Carleton, in Cambridgeshire, being perhaps over sixty years of age.

The *Governor* was published in 1531, when its author was probably rather more than forty, and contained a proem to Henry VIII, between whom and his 'natural country' his duty is divided. He desires to employ his 'one talent' for the behoof of others, not in the spirit of a proud pedagogue—'myself having the most need of teaching'—but in the hope that a compendium dealing with the

The *Governor*.

education of the governors, or rulers, of the future, may be of public utility. The state, as he views it, is a body compact of 'sundry estates and degrees of men,' with a single head or sovereign governor, who appoints as his eyes, ears, hands, and legs, inferior governors. It is with the training of these last rather than with that of royal princes that Elyot is occupied; and, whilst not excluding from his corps of magistrates persons of worth promoted from the ranks, assumes that it will be recruited in the main from the class of gentlemen to which he himself belonged.

As an omnivorous reader, Elyot did not form his book entirely out of his own observations and reflections, but studied with extreme care what his predecessors in the same line of thought had recorded on the subject. John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus*, Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, which he mentions with lavish praise and acknowledgement, Giovanni Pontano's *De Principe*, and, still more, a treatise by Francesco Patrizi (Bishop of Gaeta, 1460-1496), *De Regno et Regis Institutione*, of which there had appeared in 1520 a printed translation in French, were the principal sources from which he drew, but he reinforced these fountains of supply by draining the classic writers of Greece and Rome. Thus many vintages contributed to a result which, whatever we may now think of its practical value, lacked no element of thoroughness and elegant assimilation.

We have said—what is true—that Elyot did not approach his task in the temper of a pedagogue; still it cannot be denied that the *Governor* is pedagogy—pedagogy with a qualification. If such an apparent contradiction in terms may be admitted, it is impassioned pedagogy. Elyot's is a sanguine nature indulging in dreams and visions of humanity made perfect; and all his detail is caught up

and woven into a gracious pattern—a pattern of what great men ought to be. So convinced is he of the practicality of his ideal, and of the wisdom and necessity of taking measures for attaining it, that he does not spare himself the uttermost drudgery. Holding everything important in the foundation of a truly noble character, he jealously guards against the invasion of confusing or discordant influences—there must be no ribaldry or even baby-talk in his nursery—while he provides for the successive stages of the future governor's education on lines which may be reckoned ordinary, and only become extraordinary by reason of the care, minuteness, and we may add, enthusiasm with which they are laid down and enforced. Elyot's enthusiasm manifests itself in those passages wherein he contemns the notion that great learning is a disparagement to high rank, and suggests that noblemen would be more fitly employed in teaching their children than in playing at dice.

Manly exercises he commends, and indeed discriminates between them in a way that will strike the modern sportsman with not a little surprise. Coursing, in his opinion, is an occupation worthy only of students, cowards, and women; and even hunting, when confined to following the hounds, is hardly good enough for him. His hunting-man must ride forth armed with javelins and other weapons, in order that the chase may deserve the description so often applied to it—mimicry of war.

On one point Elyot is greatly at variance with later practice, inasmuch as he advocates that Latin should be learnt colloquially, but there was at that time a reason for this procedure which no longer exists, since Latin was then the language of diplomacy. He includes in his liberal curriculum music in moderation, and dancing; and to the latter accomplishment he imparts a mystic or sym-

bolical meaning by comparing its figures to that first of moral virtues—prudence.

This makes a suitable transition to the second book, which is taken up with analyses of certain moral qualities indispensable to real nobility of character. Benignity or gentleness is one, which is subdivided into affability, placability, and mercy. Friendship, again, has two principal ingredients, benevolence and beneficence, while ingratitude and detraction are rightly denounced as pestilent evils. The third book continues the process with reference to other aspects of morality—such as justice. Elyot illustrates his points with examples derived from various sources—notably from the history of his own country, but perhaps the most telling and attractive is the narrative of Titus and Gisippus, adduced as 'a figure of perfect amity.' This is the subject of one of the tales in the *Decameron*, from which it may ultimately have come. Probably, however, Elyot is indebted rather to Francesco Beroaldo's Latin than to Boccaccio's Italian, although, it is fair to say, his own presentment of the tale is marked by wide departures from both.

Miscellaneous Writings.

Concerning his other works there is no need to speak at length. The *Castle of Health* is an attempt to do for the body what the *Governor* has already done for the mind, or the soul. First published in 1534, it was, as a matter of course, ill received by the faculty, but cordially welcomed by the lay public, which absorbed ten or a dozen editions. The same year appeared his translation of Isocrates' oration to Nicocles under the title of the *Doctrine of Princes*; and, unable to relax his hold of the master interest, in 1540 he sent forth his *Image of Governance*, which professes to be a translation of a Greek composition dealing with the acts and sentences of 'the noble Emperor Alexander Severus.'

The composition in question, of which nothing is known, was almost certainly a forgery, but accepted by Elyot in good faith. His dialogue between Plato and Aristippus, inspired by his readings in Diogenes Laertius, and entitled *Of the Knowledge which Maketh a Wise Man*, is one more proof of his intense love of moral philosophy, while his *Pasquil the Plain* treats in jesting tones of that golden silence which proverbial wisdom prefers to speech. In another dialogue he defends the honour of women against the aspersions so often cast on the sex.

One set of writings constitutes a bold incursion into the domains of the clergy. Such are his *Banquet of Sapience* and his translations of St. Cyprian's 'sweet and devout sermon' on the *Morality of Man*, and of Pico della Mirandola's *Rules of a Christian Life*. Two years before his decease he penned and dedicated to his friend Sir Edward North his *Remedies against Death*, a little work in which he fortified himself for the inevitable change.

In this brief enumeration we cannot be sure that we have touched on all of Elyot's writings, exclusive of his Latin-English Dictionary, for an anonymous translation from Plutarch, *How one may take Profit of his Enemies*, and a compilation from the same author, *The manner to choose and cherish a Friend*, have both with some reason been attributed to him; and it seems unquestionable that he committed himself to an historical undertaking of large compass, *De Rebus Memoralibus Angliae*. The only other achievement to which it is necessary to advert is the aforesaid Latin-English Dictionary, which was far in advance of any similar work yet produced in England, and in regard to which his patient labours won for him the emphatic approval of Henry VIII. To his disinterested toil in this uninviting sphere he owed, perhaps, more than to aught else, his

Latin-English Dictionary.

exemption from the fate which overtook his friend More, and from which no prominent man, least of all an intimate of the fallen minister, could count himself secure.

Mention of Elyot's dictionary suggests a passing reference to Sir John Cheke, whose name will ever be a household word on account of Milton's lines:

> Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheke,
> Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
> When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward Greek.

Sir John Cheke.

Cheke did not shine as an author, although his court appointment was partly, no doubt, the outcome of a treatise called *A Remedy for Sedition*, written at the age of twenty-two. Born in 1514 at Cambridge, he was a student at St. John's, and earned a great reputation for Greek scholarship, the classic for whom he felt most esteem being Demosthenes. Cheke, with the help of his friend Edward Smith, sought to reform the current mode of pronouncing Greek, which had come in with the language and was based on modern usage. This, he maintained, was a corruption of the ancient manner. It does, indeed, seem most improbable that the Attic orators should have sounded three of the vowels alike; about the original value of *beta* one is less certain. Anyhow, Cheke manfully withstood Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, who, as Vice-Chancellor, officially condemned the new methods, and thus paved the way for an English pronunciation of Greek more determinate, if not truer and more scientific.

His learning saved Cheke during the crisis brought about by Queen Mary's accession, when he got off with exile and escheat of his belongings. Being afterwards arrested and sent home, he recanted, and was subjected to the refined cruelty of having to sit on the bench and listen

to the death-sentences of his braver co-religionists. He died in 1557 at the comparatively early age of forty-three

These few lines of biography, and in a literary history it were difficult to write more, will convey a most inadequate idea of the importance of Sir John Cheke as he figured in the eyes of his contemporaries, unless they are supplimented by the testimony of eminent persons who looked up to him as a father. This is often—indeed, nearly always—the case with academic reputations. Were it not for De Quincey's essay, what would have become of the memory of the once celebrated Dr. Samuel Parr? Mere crow-like longevity, like that of his namesake, is a surer passport to immortality than Ciceronian purity. However, the height of Cheke's attainments is sufficiently guaranteed. Thomas Nash describes him as 'a man of men, supernaturally traded in all tongues.' Sir T. Wilson praises him as 'that rare learned man and singular ornament of this land,' and Ascham, in a tone of more intimate affection and esteem, as 'my dearest friend, and best master that I had in learning, such a man as if I should live to see England breed the like again, I fear I should live overlong.' This commendation appears in *The Schoolmaster*. From Ascham's earlier treatise, *Toxophilus*, it transpires that the younger scholar was on terms of reverent familiarity with Master Cheke, who 'of his gentleness' would often have him with him in his chamber. 'And verily as often as I remember the departing of that man from the university (which thing I do not seldom) so well do I perceive our most help and furtherance to learning to have gone away with him.'

Roger Ascham.

If Sir John Cheke is famous as the tutor of Edward VI, his disciple, Roger Ascham, is recollected, but not for this alone, as the instructor and friend of Queen Elizabeth. A Yorkshireman, born in 1515, at Kirkby Wiske (or Wicke), he came of decent

parentage, his father, John Ascham, being house-steward to Lord Scrope, while his mother, Margaret, was a woman with good connections. When quite young, he was noticed by Sir Humphrey Wingfield, who, though he had sons of his own, 'adopted' many children for the purpose of education, 'and when they should play, he would go with them himself into the field, see them shoot, and he that shot fairest, should have the best bow and shafts, and he that shot ill-favouredly, should be mocked of his fellows till he shot better.' Meanwhile till about the year 1530, his studies were arranged by a Mr. R. Bond. Ascham then proceeded to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took his degree in 1534; and 'being a boy, new bachelor of art,' was so indiscreet as to blaspheme his Holiness the Pope in the hearing of some companions. For this he incurred the heavy censure of the master, who, nevertheless, went out of his way to procure Ascham's election as fellow. He was appointed also professor of Greek in the university and lecturer in his own college; and in 1537 was installed M.A. In 1538 he journeyed to Yorkshire to see his parents after an absence of full seven years; but thence on his visits became more frequent and extended. In 1540-42 he was in Yorkshire for the best part of two years owing to quartan fever, and his shooting feats in the chapel-field at Norwich and at the pricks between York Castle and Ouse side, probably belong to this period. Incidentally he has painted a most charming picture of the 'great snow' that fell four years before:

I rode in the high way betwixt Topcliff upon Swale and Boroughbridge, the way being somewhat trodden afore by wayfaring men. The fields on both sides were plain and lay almost yard deep with snow. The night before had been a little frost, so that the snow was hard and crusted above. That morning the sun shone bright and clear, the wind was whistling aloft,

and sharp according to the time of the year. The snow in the highway lay loose and trodden with horse feet, so as the wind blew, it took the loose snow with it, and made it so slide upon the snow in the field which was hard and crusted by reason of the frost over night, that thereby I might see very well the whole nature of the wind as it blew that day, and I had a great delight and pleasure to mark it, which maketh me now the better to remember it.

In 1541 he was granted a pension of 40*s.* (£30 of our money), after frequent solicitation, by Lee, Archbishop of York.

In 1544 both his parents died, after a union lasting forty-seven years, on the same day, and almost at the same hour; and this was likewise the date of his *Toxophilus*, or, as he speaks of it in a letter, his book *On the Art of Shooting*, dedicated to Henry VIII. The author presented a copy to the King the following year, the result being a pension of £10. In 1546 Ascham followed Cheke as Public Orator in the University of Cambridge.

On the accession of Edward VI, whom he taught to write, Ascham's pension was confirmed, and he was appointed tutor to the Princess Elizabeth, but a difference with her steward compelled his return to Cambridge. In 1550 he was made secretary to Sir Richard Morrison's embassy to Charles V, and remained abroad for about two years. In 1552 he published a report on the state of Germany based on his own observations. Before his departure as a member of this mission, he had that interview with Lady Jane Grey, at Broadgate, in Leicestershire, so pleasingly described in *The Schoolmaster*.

Queen Mary now ascended the throne, and Ascham, in common with all Protestants, must have trembled for his living, if not for his life. Strange to relate, instead of cancelling his pension, she actually increased it, and, in

addition, made him her Latin Secretary, at a salary of forty marks. The same year Ascham resigned his University appointments and married Margaret How. Meanwhile he resumed, in some measure, his former employment, and read Greek occasionally with the Princess Elizabeth.

When his pupil succeeded her sister as Queen of England, good times were in store for Ascham, who, without forfeiting pension or secretaryship, became Prebend of Werwang in York Cathedral, and now, in his prosperous days, indulged his incongruous and disreputable taste for cock-fighting. In 1563, as the fruit of conversations with Sir W. Cecil on the subject of education, he wrote his famous treatise, *The Schoolmaster*. On December 30th, 1568, he died, his last words being 'I desire to depart and be with Christ.' When the Queen was told of the melancholy event, she is said to have answered that she would rather have lost ten thousand pounds than her old tutor.

Although Ascham follows Horace in deprecating lofty titles and ambitious subjects, he could hardly have selected a topic of more general interest or profound significance than archery—the means whereby the victory had been gained for England in many a decisive engagement, and which was still of high practical importance, since the bow had not yet been superseded by the musket, and every loyal Englishman had been enjoined in the Act of 1541 to practise diligently at the butt. *Toxophilus* is not precisely a technical treatise, but it has the unique distinction of being the work of one who added to the knowledge of all that was then knowable from books in the matter a competent acquaintance with the manifold details of the art such as could be acquired only by an enthusiastic and intelligent votary. As we have seen, his youthful experiments had been made in a stern school, under the eye of a stern and yet just and

Toxophilus.

appreciative critic, and since Ascham was only twenty-eight when his book was published—and it might have been some years preparing—he was still in the flower of his age; a firm believer in the value and wholesomeness of the pursuit, and who can doubt? a most accomplished exponent of the manly exercise he undertook to commend.

> Would to God all England had used or would use to lay the foundation of youth, after the example of this worshipful man in bringing up children in the Book and the Bow; in which two things the whole commonwealth both in peace and war is chiefly ruled and defended withal.
>
> But to our purpose, he that must come to this high perfectness in shooting which we speak of, must needs begin to learn it in his youth, the omitting of which thing in England both maketh fewer shooters, and also every man that is a shooter shoot worse than he might, if he were taught.

It is rather, however, as a maker of English prose than a toxophile that Ascham is to-day esteemed. He had an exceedingly low opinion of those who had forestalled him in the attempt, and regarded himself, to all intents and purposes, as a pioneer hampered by a lack of precedent. This view is hardly fair to some of our early prose-writers who deserved to have better things said of them than that they took refuge in English merely because they had no sufficient command of Latin, and had marred, not enriched their native language by tasteless adulteration with foreign ingredients. Thinking so ill of his predecessors, Ascham had to decide on the sort of English in which to clothe his own matter, and he found a useful hint in Aristotle, recommending the use of homely, colloquial phrase as most widely intelligible. Guided by this rule, Ascham struck out a simple, direct and racy style, whose greatest charm is *naïveté*. Always pointed and workmanlike, it reveals at every turn his mastery of the subject and the instrument

by which his thoughts are conveyed. Ascham does not aim at eloquence, though he would not have disowned a certain dignity; still he can wield the period when he lists. For instance:

> But as for the Turks I am weary to talk of them partly because I hate them, and partly because I am now affectioned even as it were a man that had been long wandering in strange countries and would fain be at home to see how well his own friends prosper and lead their life; and surely methinks I am very merry at my heart to find how I shall find at home in England amongst Englishmen, partly by histories of them that have gone afore us, again by experience of them which we know, and live with us, as great noble feats of war done by artillery as ever was done at any time in any other commonwealth.

The Schoolmaster.

In *Toxophilus* Ascham has dealt with the Bow; in *The Schoolmaster*, written some thirty years later, he treats of the Book. Here, again, much of the pleasure of perusal depends on the 'asides' and digressions serving as side-lights on the times and the character of the writer, but in a work on so vital a subject as education we ought not to look for what Ascham, with his hearty contempt for fiction, never designed for us—the beguiling of an idle hour. On the contrary, the treatise merits all the study and attention that we can possibly bestow on it as the repository of the ripe wisdom of a great scholar and acquaintance of great scholars, whose imperfections he does not scruple to criticise, and a teacher who, having tested his theories by practice, could state with the authority thus gained what methods were good, what bad, and for whom. Excessive devotion to grammar he condemns as surperfluous, and therefore harmful; and his sovereign recipe is that of double translation, *i.e.*, from Latin into Greek and from Greek into Latin, this being,

he maintains, conducive to a good delectus and thorough comprehension of the grammar and idioms of the two model languages. Ascham had tried the experiment on Queen Elizabeth, when a simple princess, and he testifies that 'there be few in number in both the Universities or elsewhere in England, that be, in both tongues, comparable to her Majesty.'

John Lyly.

Despite obvious differences, which may be set down in part to the credit of the new time and the imperative need of conciliating the favour and patronage of the court, the intellectual son and heir of Roger Ascham was without doubt John Lyly. Good judges, 'tis true, thought not nearly so well of him. 'The finest wit,' says Gabriel Harvey, 'prefer the loosest period in M. Ascham or Sir Philip Sidney to the thickest page in *Euphues* or *Pap Hatchet*.' The finest wits were, perhaps, right, but in the case of a writer like Lyly, whose tricks are so persistently thrust into the eyes of his readers, caution is doubly necessary, lest, in a fit of resentment, we shut them to virtues of which he has surely not a few. 'In spite of occasional tediousness, as brave, righteous and pious a book as man need look into'—that was Charles Kingsley's verdict on *Euphues*, and it may well be ours—at any rate, as regards its aim.

Lyly makes no great demand with his life, the particulars of which are mostly lost. Born about 1553, in the Weald of Kent, he proceeded to Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1569, was Bachelor of Arts in 1573, and the following year, backed by the powerful, yet ineffectual influence of Lord Burghley, was in quest of a fellowship, in which quest he was foiled. To this, and possibly more, 'unkindness,' he alludes in his *Euphues*. However, Lord Burghley, still standing his friend, found him some kind of employment; and, after taking his Master's degree, Lyly seems to have migrated

to Cambridge. *Euphues; or, the Anatomy of Wit*, was published early in 1579; and *Euphues and his England* the year after. Between 1584 and 1601 Lyly wrote nine plays, of which the titles are the following: *Alexander and Campaspe, Sappho and Phao, Endimion, Galathea, Midas, Mother Bombie, The Woman in the Moon, The Maid's Metamorphosis, Love's Metamorphosis.* There is reason, also, to suspect him of being the author of the aforesaid anonymous tract, *Pap with a Hatchet*, evoked by the Martin Marprelate controversy. All this time Lyly appears to have been leading a Bohemian life in town, but his private history is impenetrably obscure. That a writer of whom Edward Blount testified in 1634 'that beauty in court which could not parley Euphuism was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French' can have appeared to people a 'slight unmeritable man,' whose fortunes concerned nobody but himself, is hardly credible, but we have to accept the fact that his footprints in the sands of time—apart from his writings—have been effaced. At the worst, he has fared no worse than Shakespeare. Lyly probably died soon after the publication of his last play.

Euphues.

The germ of *Euphues* may be discovered in certain passages in the first book of *The Schoolmaster*, directed against incoming fashions, detestable to the manly old author. As he reminds us, the Italians had a half-rhyming proverb, not too flattering to themselves, *Inglese italianato è un diavolo incarnato.* If Lyly had been so minded, he might with considerable propriety have chosen this proverb as the motto of his work, only in that case he would have been obliged to remodel it somewhat so that the real object of his rather faltering attack might be fully disclosed. In the present chapter we have viewed the Renaissance solely in its literary aspect, in which it made its strongest appeal to

the English people, for the English were not then a specially artistic nation. Even in its literary aspect, the movement was not not unqualifiedly wholesome, and it was for its unwholesomeness that Ascham assailed with vehement invective the rank Italian literature that had sprung, like some deadly nightshade, from the upturned mould of antique Paganism. This literature was not a mere academic revival; its roots were closely entwined with the social, political, domestic interests of the age, its fruit was poison to the young and fair; and thus the distinctive horror and distrust that Ascham felt for a development which menaced with the specious snare of Sybaritic beauty, with artfully concealed decay, the sturdy life of his countrymen, was only too well justified by the ungainly facts. 'The dead Renaissance,' says Ruskin, 'drew back into its earthliness, out of all that was warm and heavenly; back into its pride, out of all that was simple and kind; back into its stateliness, out of all that was impulsive, reverent, and gay. But it understood the luxury of the body; the terraced and scented and grottoed garden, with its trickling fountains and slumbrous shades; the spacious hall and lengthened corridor for the summer heat; the well-closed windows, and perfect fittings and furniture, for defence against the cold; and the soft picture and frescoed wall and roof, covered with the last lasciviousness of Paganism:—this it understood and possessed to the full, and still possesses.'

This, then, is the sort of existence, with its false glitter of intelligence and gnawing vice and indulgence, that Lyly has mirrored in his *Euphues*, choosing for its principal scene that sink of all iniquity, Naples. The story is hardly worth tracing in detail, since the plot is not particularly ingenious, but it may be said that both incidents and personages are well fitted to drive home the moral which

is the main purpose of the book, and that is the profoundly disappointing result of a scheme of things under which female honour is surrendered, and the mind, instead of being braced by worthy exercise, is tickled with idle play, which alone has a tendency to impair its vigour and stability.

Lyly's most notable advice to young Englishmen is not to spend their lives in the laps of ladies. That he means young Englishmen, not young Athenians, is certain, but, with the timidity which so often distinguishes mere men of learning from men of religion, executes in his *Euphues and his England* a kind of recantation, which was, in some degree, due to the superior rectitude of his home-keeping fellow-subjects. England, and especially Englishwomen, are still untainted by the apple of recovered knowledge, and Philautus finds in Lady Viola rich compensation for the thrice-perjured Lucilla. There in this continuation Lyly may revenge himself for his needs-must suppression of confessed satire by many a stroke of disguised irony, but always his motive is good and reformative, even as his heart is as little cynical as Ascham's. It would, indeed, not be difficult to call passage upon passage witnessing to his sincerely religious bent.

Euphues and his England.

There yet remains the question as to the character of the means whereby his excellent object is sought to be attained. Lyly has stolen the clothes of the adversary; 'tis in these that he preaches, and whatsoever attraction they may have for the vagrant will and desire they retain, even on *his* back. Here we are concerned more especially with his style, which is the baser Renaissance expressing itself in language. *Euphues* is the apotheosis of mere ornament in speech.

Style.

> Talking of stones, stars, plants, of fishes, flies,
> Playing with words and idle similies

is Drayton's description of it. Exaggerated display of knowledge, excess of allusion, is one of the notes of Lyly's writing, but not the most characteristic. Rather it were just to account it an amiable weakness shared by many of his contemporaries, including Ascham. His 'playing with words,' on the other hand, merits sterner treatment, for such play as his belies, stultifies, and undermines all that is grateful and genuine in human discourse, and substitutes for truth and beauty of expression the soulless rigidity of the Perpendicular Style dominating the architecture of the period.

Lyly may be designated a resurgent Athenian rhetorician, in the strictly technical sense of that term—one, that is, who does not aim at the simple and yet adequate projection of an idea, but cramps its presentation, procures its deformity, by fitting it despotically into artificial cast-iron grooves of pre-existing pattern rather than allowing it to assume becoming corporeal shape through the gentle working of a natural process of germination. His parallel clauses, his 'transverse alliteration,' his punctilious antithesis are permissible within limits—they are even good as occasional aids and embellishments, but carried to the pitch of pointless and persistent emphasis, they resemble the performances of an acrobat, which illustrate the strained and startling capabilities of the human form, not its proper use or inherent dignity, and the 'vaulting ambition falls on the other.' A work in which these characteristics are almost uniformly sustained—the chapter on Euphues is a welcome exception—hardly deserves the name of true literature. At the best, it is a curious experiment, not imitable by the wise; at the worst, a blameworthy prostitution of noble powers of language to the itching ears of court gentlemen and court ladies—parrots questing for catch phrases.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORICAL AND EPISTOLARY.

John Capgrave.

The historians of the age—most of them were mere chroniclers—are incomparably less important than the succession of splendid wits dealt with in the preceding chapter. The earliest of them, John Capgrave, or Brother John, as he loved to style himself, is, if not a distinguished writer, certainly a very interesting person, and if we allow for his limitations as a friar 'compassed murkily about' with mediaeval darkness and prejudice, we cannot rightly withhold an ample measure of respect. Born at Lynn in Norfolk, April 21st, 1394, and educated according to Leland's not unlikely conjecture at Cambridge (though he was a Doctor of Divinity of Oxford), Capgrave was a priest at twenty-four, and entering the house of Austin Friars at Lynn, rose to be its prior, and, in addition, provincial of the order in England. He died August 12th, 1464, at the age of seventy-one.

The greater part of Brother John's long life was divided between ecclesiastical duty and laborious literary effort, the principal break being occasioned by a visit to Rome, where he fell sick and was carefully tended by his countryman, William Gray, afterwards Bishop of Ely. His writings, for a friar, are fairly multifarious. He composed commentaries on many of the books of the Bible, beginning with Genesis and ending with the Apocalypse; he published

sermons and dogmatic disquisitions; and of biography he was especially prodigal, his lives ranging from those of St. Augustine and his followers to that of Humphry, Duke of Gloucester. Tradition makes him the compiler of a catalogue of English saints, which Wynkyn de Worde was to print under the title of *Nova Legenda Angliae.* All these works were in Latin, but Capgrave wrote in English a *Life of St. Gilbert of Sempringham,* the sole copy of which, a manuscript in the Cotton Library, was consumed in the fire of 1731. In English, too, and in rhyme, is his *Life of St. Katherine,* which, according to its author, is a refurbishing of an older poem by a West-Country priest—one Arreck, of whom strange things are reported.

As an historian, Capgrave is known as the producer of two rather important works—*The Book of the Noble Henries* and a *Chronicle of England.* The former, which is in Latin, is composed of three parts, which treat of six Henries who had worn the Imperial crown of Germany, six Henries who had been Kings of England, and twelve Henries, who, though neither kings nor emperors, had succeeded in making themselves famous. The first section, as containing nothing that may not be gleaned from more original sources, is of no special value; the second and third, on the contrary, are replete with interest and instruction—especially the third, which, though not free from errors and marred sometimes by a tendency to eulogize, sometimes by diplomatic silence, is yet a genuine contribution to our knowledge of the times. The *Chronicle of England,* which is also an English chronicle, would have been materially improved by the omission of the exordium, a conventional summary of universal history, and the addition of chapters recording the events of Capgrave's own lifetime. The retrospect contracts on the accession of Henry III, from which epoch the affairs of the country

find a tolerably faithful remembrancer in the Prior of Lynn. In one direction, however, the love of truth and impartiality, which was Capgrave's endowment, succumbs to the suggestions of natural antipathy. A devoted son of the Catholic Church, he was unable to see any good in the Lollards, and the bare mention of Wyclif or Oldcastle suffices to upset his usual calm equilibrium.

Capgrave's English style is plain and simple, offering no special points to criticism, but it may be remarked that on occasion the transparency, which is also one of its most constant characteristics, becomes tinged with vivid and varied hues of unconscious transfiguration.

John Bourchier, Lord Berners.

A greater contrast than exists between Brother John and the writer of whom it now falls to us to treat, it is impossible to conceive. From a religious recluse we have abruptly to turn to John Bourchier, a soldier and the son of a soldier, who was born in 1467, at Therfield in Hertfordshire, and having studied—so 'tis said—at Balliol College, Oxford, fought Henry VII's oversea foes and Peter Warbeck's Cornishmen, was present at the capture of Terouenne in 1513, and the same year took the field against the Scots as marshal in the army of the Earl of Surrey. He was chamberlain to the Princess Mary, sister to Henry VIII, on her marriage to Louis XII of France; was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, as which his portrait was painted by Holbein; was colleague of the Archbishop of Armagh in a mission to the court of Madrid in 1518; was at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, with his wife, in 1520, and in the last month of that year was designated Lieutenant of Calais during the king's pleasure, which was continued during the remainder of his favoured subject's life. Berners died on March 16th, 1523. Notwithstanding the important posts he was called upon to fill, he was constantly

under water financially, and although Henry VIII helped him with loans and the occasional gift of a manor, nothing served to extricate him from the pecuniary quagmire in which he went on struggling to the day of his final departure. For this he had been, in some measure, prepared by years of infirm health.

Translation of Froissart's *Chronicles.*

Berners' literary activity belongs to his period of residence at Calais, his chief work being beyond question his translation of Froissart's *Chronicles*, which was undertaken at the command of Henry VIII. It is not without reason that this is regarded, even to-day, as the palmary version of the famous French history, since it realizes all that can be desired in a translation. The English is so thoroughly idiomatic that, in reading, one loses all sensation of the book being merely an interpretation and resigns oneself to its easy and familiar flow with the same joyful complacency as if it were a strictly original work. On the other hand, if one insists on breaking the spell by comparing it with the French text, one is struck not only with the felicity, but with the fidelity of the rendering. That it was throughout a labour of love, cannot be doubted, for the translator, as Lieutenant of Calais, was England's watch on the soil of France, where the feats of the Black Prince, depicted by Froissart, and by Berners after him, in brave, imperishable colours, were so gallantly, and, as it were, miraculously performed.

Further experiments.

The Lieutenant, however, was not satisfied with this one taste of literary glory. He therefore turned into English three French romances in their later prose form—*Huon of Bordeaux*, *Sir Arthur of Little Britain*, and the *Castle of Love*. The first proved the most popular, the primitive edition, which appeared in 1534, being followed by two others, in 1570

and 1601 respectively. It is a curious circumstance that we get our Oberon, distinctly a Teutonic creation, through this medium from a French narrative.

The style of these relations, as of Froissart's *Chronicles*, is extremely artless, and thus diametrically opposed to that of the author, with one of whose productions Berners, at the instance of his nephew, Sir Francis Bryan,[1] occupied his last days. We refer to the *Marcus Aurelius* of the Spanish bishop, Antonio Guevara, who, in spite of denials, must be accounted a literary progenitor, if not the immediate model of our Lyly. Berners' translation, based probably on a French intermediary, met with great success and made Marcus Aurelius, as he is presented in this historico-didactic romance, very real to the succeeding generation of Englishmen—far more so, indeed, than any of the personages of Froissart. Lord Berners is credited also with a religious drama, *Ite ad Vineam*, founded on the parable of the vineyard, and with translations of Petrarch's Sonnets. These attempts, especially in the absence of the texts, must be considered problematical.

John Bale, whom we already know as a dramatist, is the authority for the statement that Berners wrote the play, *Ite ad Vineam*, and he adds that it was often performed at Calais after Vespers. Bale is authority for much else, and in the ordinary course of things we should now proceed to consider him on his other side, as a diligent historical writer. First, however, we must step aside in order to take account of a pair of chroniclers, who, though differing in many respects, have this point in common, that they are both specially concerned with the city of London, with which they had official connections, and

[1] Sir Francis Bryan himself translated one of Guevara's characteristic pieces under the title of *Dispraise of the Life of a Courtier*, which was published first in 1548, and again in 1575.

regard history and contemporary events, not in the broadest sense, as Englishmen, but with the rather contracted vision of municipal functionaries.

Robert Fabyan.

Of the two, Robert Fabyan was the elder. A draper by occupation, and an important member of the Drapers' Company, who, with others, pleaded with the king for the welfare of his craft, when the Archduke levied a duty of a florin on every piece of English cloth exported to the Netherlands, and succeeded in obtaining the withdrawal of the impost—he was alderman of the ward of Farringdon Without, and Sheriff of Middlesex in 1493. Nine years later he doffed his alderman's gown to escape the costly honour of the mayoralty, for his wife had presented him with a family of sixteen, of whom four sons and two daughters survived. Fabyan died in 1512.

This worthy citizen joined to business talents, evidently of a high order, a competent knowledge of French and Latin; and, armed with these accomplishments, he attacked the monkish chronicles for the purpose of compiling a history of England, the first to be written in English prose, and extending from the time of Brut to his own not unromantic days. With equal modesty and good sense he describes it in a prefatory Chaucerian stanza as a medley of material for a more gifted successor; and it is certain that Fabyan himself had neither the mastery of style nor the philosophic insight and discrimination necessary to an historian of rank. Even as regards its content, his comprehensive work, first issued as *Concordance of Histories* and then as *New Chronicles of England and France*, has little substantive value, except in reference to events of his own age. However, it passed through four editions, of which the last, issued in 1559, included an appendix by another hand, bringing down the narrative to

the accession of Queen Elizabeth. One feature of it is Fabyan's obstinate attachment to the Catholic Church, which may almost be accounted its regnant principle, as, for example, in the rehearsal of the dispute between Becket and Henry II. This is tempered, however, by a noticeable disinclination to accept without qualification reports of ecclesiastical miracles and the like.

Edward Hall.

Edward Hall was of higher stamp. An alumnus of Eton and of Cambridge, in 1518 he entered Gray's Inn, where he was to be in later years Summer Reader and Double Reader in Lent. In 1532 he was appointed Sergeant of the City of London, and in 1540, one of the judges of the Sheriff's Court. In the Parliament of 1542 he sat for Bridgenorth as a partisan of the king; and died in 1547.

Hall's chronicle was published first in 1542, and again, with certain additions drawn from his own papers, in 1548. A third edition appeared in 1550. The work bore a stupendously long title, of which it will suffice to quote the commencement: *The Union of the Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York*; and its merits were considerable. They consist partly in the dramatic conception and handling of the subject, and partly in the supply of fresh and important facts. For the events of the reign of Henry VII Hall is indeed largely indebted to the Latin history of Polydore Vergil, which he closely follows both in manner and matter; but in treating the time of Henry VIII—his own time—he displays ample independence. We owe to him precious hints on the early efforts of the English drama; and Shakespeare repaid the compliment by making large use of Hall's chronicle in the bodying forth of his historical plays. Moreover, as has been intimated, Hall gives marked attention to the vicissitudes of London life—the squabble between 'prentices and aliens

on Evil May-day and the negotiations between Wolsey and the Corporation for the provision of funds being two of the episodes on which he discourses in the intimate style born of a first-hand acquaintance with the circumstances.

John Bale.

We come back to John Bale. If we have contrived to bisect this writer—in the year 1540—it is because he has bisected himself by a cleavage in his pursuits. It seems absurd to describe Bale—a man cast in nature's austerest mould—as being at any time of his life a dilettante, still he must endure this stigma in respect to his play-writing, a pleasant pastime to which, a stranger in a strange land and with a daily keener appreciation of the stringency of the age in religious matters, he now put a term. In distant Germany, Bale, his gaze still fixed on his own country, collected from the writings of Oldcastle's judges damning evidence of the trial and death of that 'blessed martyr,' and from Oldcastle's terrible ordeal he turned to investigate the more recent case of Anne Askew, or Ascough, daughter of a Lincolnshire knight, tortured and burned in 1546—the year in which Bale wrote and published his *Acts of English Votaries*, a trenchant indictment of the monastic system.

Happily for the Reformers, Edward VI succeeded his father the following year, when Bale, returning to England, was presented to the rectory of Bishopstoke, in Hampshire. In 1550 he published his *Image of Both Churches*, a controversial analysis and exposition of the Apocalypse. The next year he was collated to the vicarage of Swaffham, in Norfolk; and in 1552 had a chance meeting with King Edward at Southampton, and was forthwith appointed Bishop of Ossory. His administration of the Irish diocese was not a success, as is shown quite plainly by his *Vocation of John Bale*. On the accession of Queen Mary he had to quit Ireland, and in an attempt to reach the Continent

fell into the hands of pirates, who sold him into slavery. However, he finally reached Basel, where he resumed his literary occupation. He lived to return to England once more in 1559—but not to fight. His closing years were spent at Canterbury, where he died, a prebendary of the cathedral, in 1563.

Summary of British Writers.

Apart from the fugitive compositions above-mentioned, Bale projected and completed an encyclopaedic undertaking, by which, though executed in Latin, he has placed under permanent obligations all who are, or shall be, interested in the story of English literature. We allude to his *Illustrium Majoris Britanniae Scriptorum Summarium* (or Summary of British Writers), printed in its earliest form in 1548 after his first return to England, and notably enlarged during his subsequent exile at Basel, where it was reprinted by Oporinus with a portrait of the author. A last instalment was added in 1559, and included an index to the whole. The method of construction adopted was division into 'centuries' or hundreds, of which there were ultimately fourteen, so that the number of writers of whom notices are furnished amounts to fourteen hundred. This is ample proof of Bale's astounding industry, and if he can be convicted of occasional blunders, such lapses are hardly to be wondered at, and may easily be forgiven in view of the vast amount of solid information which must otherwise have perished. Unfortunately the work is deformed by palpable eccentricity, which leads him to perpetrate the childish and irrelevant folly of annexing Adam, Seth, and Enoch, as representatives of prediluvian authorship. So, too, he introduces Cardinal Pole merely to anathematize him, with many other harsh epithets, as 'a most impious betrayer of his country.' No wonder the epithet 'bilious' was fixed upon him. It was a savage age,

and a literary phrase is a *brutum fulmen* compared with some of the agencies employed on either side. Still, John Bale was no meek or lamb-like individual, and his writings testify that all the fury and prejudice was not confined to the Catholic hobgoblins whom he impaled with his pen, and whom, had he been able, he would pretty certainly have paid in kind.

Bale and Leland.

Bale's largest and greatest work was similar in character and scope to certain compilations, completed or projected by John Leland—notably *De Viris Illustribus* and *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis*, to which he confesses himself indebted. In other ways Bale's masterful personality did not allow him to leave his younger contemporary alone, and while he profited by his labours, he seems to have desired to play the patron as well, to show Leland the way, to eke out his literary and scientific ingatherings with sturdy pronouncements on current topics and outrageous moral reflexions of his own. It is in this sense that he translated and edited Leland's *Strena Henrico Octavo oblata*, or New Year's Gift to the King in 1546, which three years later Bale caused to be printed with a salvo of compliments to the Roman hierarchy, in which were shot forth such expletives as 'oiled bishops,' 'professed soldiers of Antichrist,' and 'most execrable livers.' This was *à propos* of the suppression of the monasteries, for which those priests and prelates were only indirectly to blame, and the consequent loss of many valuable writings, which both historians joined in deploring. Bale, however, was before all things a Reformer, while Leland was a pure humanist. The superior practical ability of the former is attested by the fact that, in spite of disadvantages, he succeeded in getting his works printed, whereas the publication of Leland's *Strena* or *Laborious Journey and Search for England's Antiquities*—the only

work of his printed during his lifetime or for a century and a half after his death—was due not to his own management, but to this same John Bale. It is true that Bale had a balance of twenty years in his favour, and that his mental faculties remained unbroken to the end, but the real explanation of Leland's woeful lack of publicity lay less in his ultimate misfortunes and premature decease, than in the far-reaching nature of his plans, and a dreamy idealism which refused to crystallize into fact until fact could express all that imagination had conceived and industry toiled to realize.

John Leland.

Leland was a true child of the Renaissance. A Londoner, born in 1506 or 1507, he was soon an orphan, and, as such, owed a debt of gratitude to a scholar, Thomas Miles, whom some have identified with the Prior of Boxgrove of that name. Educated at St. Paul's School and at Christ's College, Cambridge, he was subsequently Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, whence, assisted by an exhibition from Henry VIII, he proceeded to the University of Paris. Already an accomplished Latinist and Grecian, with a rare faculty for verse, he now made himself acquainted with the Romance languages, French, Spanish, and Italian, to which he afterwards added Welsh and Anglo-Saxon, so that he may be justly esteemed one of the most talented linguists of his age. Not being a violent partisan, and keeping for the most part discreetly within his chosen sphere of literary endeavour and historical research, he became a special favourite of Henry VIII, who appointed him one of his chaplains, and presented him to the rectory of Poppeling in the Marches of Calais, which office he was authorized from 1536 onwards to discharge by deputy. In 1533 he was named 'King's Antiquary,' an honourable post apparently created for him, in which he was allowed to draw a salary

and invested with a sort of roving commission for conducting an inventory of the realm. Leland showed his gratitude by composing a dialogue in forty-five chapters, entitled *Antiphilarchia*, and directed against the supremacy of the Pope, a claim which his learned investigations led him more firmly to reject.

Travels.

For six years—from 1536 to 1542—he patiently assailed this gigantic task, loyally supported by the King, who fed him with church preferments, and if for any reason he lost one, took care to compensate him with another, as good or better. In the end Leland was able to report: 'All my other occupations intermitted, I have so travelled in your dominions both by the sea-coasts and the middle parts, sparing neither labour nor costs by the space of these six years past, that there is almost neither cape nor bay, haven, creek or pier, river or confluence of rivers, beaches, washes, lakes, meres, fenny waters, mountains, valleys, moors, heaths, forests, woods, cities, boroughs, castles, principal manor places, monasteries and colleges, but I have seen them, and noted in so doing a whole world of things very memorable.' Not only so, but he drew up lists of works in various libraries, extracting from them such passages as seemed to him of particular importance, and he purposed, with the aid of his voluminous notes, to depict 'this world and impery of England.' Nor was he content that his work should be indited in that meagre and pitiful style, which unsympathetic judges have awarded, as their undoubted privilege and distinction, to Oldbucks—he would have it written 'in a flourishing style in some time past not commonly used in England of writers otherwise well-learned, but now in such estimation that except Truth be delicately clothed to purple her written verities can scant find a reader.'

With a magnanimous disregard for the shortness and

uncertainty of life and the finite powers of the mind, Leland laid down for himself a programme from which the mere modern shrinks back appalled—one book to be devoted to the topography of Britain, fifty to the civil history; six more to deal with the adjacent isles of Wight, Anglesey, and Man, 'sometime kingdoms'; and the whole enterprise to be concluded with three books of heraldic or genealogical interest, the first being dedicated to the somewhat abstract and unpractical study of pre-Saxon pedigrees, although the object of the work is that 'all noblemen shall clearly perceive their lineal parentele.' However, much self-deception has been practised in the matter of descents.

Tragedy.

Thus proudly and confidently did Leland address himself to a work which had taken shape in his fancy as a masterpiece of the national literature, as well as a magnificent memorial of the heroic past. But, alas for human hopes! After a few years' application, occupied mainly, or solely, in the attempt to reduce his forest of material to some semblance of order, he began to sicken, and about the same time the death of his royal and munificent patron deprived him of some of the funds indispensable to the successful prosecution of an absorbing and expensive task. Still he plodded on, until his spirits became overcast, and the brightness faded from his once luminous intellect. Two years of this misery, and then—in 1552—release.

Leland's Collections.

His *magnum opus* remained a vision to inspire Drayton; and his Collections proved extremely useful to Stow and the county historians of Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Otherwise the honours of print continued to be denied until in the early part of the eighteenth century the *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis* were edited by Antony Hall, and the *Itinerary*

through most Parts of England and Wales and *Collectanea de Rebus Britannicis* by Thomas Hearne. All these stout volumes together do not fully represent John Leland as he appeared to himself; they exhibit him, at most, as he appeared to Bale, who, to be sure, speaks of his 'fine workmanship,' and deprecates comparison with him. But this is not much. What is much is that the potentially great artist of English prose—the province that Leland had specially marked for his own—perished untimely, his fruit not yet brought to perfection, his branches covered only with leaves.

John Stow.

From Leland it is natural to pass to Stow, but, in taking this step, one becomes involved in chronological perplexities. The difficulty lies here. While much of Stow's work lies within our assigned limits, as does that of his contemporary Holinshed entirely, the writing by which he is best remembered, his *Survey of London*, was published in 1598, a date decidedly 'beyond these voices.' The erection of borders is an inevitable forfeit attendant on a scheme of literary history in sections; but the problem must be grappled with, and so we propose to deal with as much of Stow as we can properly claim, having plainly intimated that there is left a goodly part of him sprawling over our frontier-line.

The career of John Stow forms, on the whole, a melancholy record. The son of a tailor and the grandson of a tailor, he himself was a contented tailor until the year 1559 or thereabouts, when in an evil hour it dawned upon him that he had mistaken his vocation, and from stitching clothes he took to the far less remunerative, though doubtless more honourable employment of sketching chronicles. Born in 1525 in Threadneedle Street, he afterwards 'kept house' near the well at Aldgate, and amongst his personal recollections was the enactment of a ghastly scene on the pavement outside his door, what time the bailiff of Rom-

ford was executed. In 1561 he published his *Summary of English Chronicles*, a useful piece of work, of which there were as many as eleven editions in the writer's lifetime, and which won for him the favour and encouragement of the Earl of Leicester. Two years passed, and then Stow embraced the momentous resolve of quitting his business in order to devote himself wholly and without distraction to the alluring study of the past. In his edition of the *Summary* published in 1573 he tells us: 'It is now ten years since I, seeing the confused order of our late English chronicles and the ignorant handling of ancient affairs, leaving my own peculiar gains, consecrated myself to the search of our famous antiquities.'

Summary of English Chronicles.

Light is thrown on the whole-hearted manner in which he applied himself to his portentous task by an official report on the contents of his library, which was so large and diversified as to suggest that he invested in it a considerable share of his savings, or the means inherited from his sartorial ancestors. In that era of religious change and excitement suspicion naturally fastened on mysterious students, who might possibly be Popish recusants, so the Bishop of London deputed John Strype, with two others, to inspect Stow's lodgings, where they found 'a great sort of old books printed' and 'a great parcel of old MS. chronicles,' besides 'books lately set forth in the realm or beyond sea in defence of Papistry,' which led the chaplain to conclude that the owner was 'a great fautor of that religion.' To add to his troubles, he had a tiresome rival who in a double sense took a leaf out of Stow's book, and vilified the original production as 'foolishly Stowed together.' The summarist replied with spirit, protesting that he did not fear 'the thundering noise of empty Tons and unfruitful Grafts of Momus' offspring.'

Stow's *Annals, or General Chronicle of England, from Brute unto this present year of Christ*, 1580, was an immense quarto of over twelve hundred pages, with an appendix on the English universities, dedicated to Lord Leicester. On the publication of this bulky volume many men would have been disposed to say 'exegi monumentum aere perennius,' and abjured the pains of authorship. But Stow was not likely to do this, seeing that he regarded the Annals as merely an expanded Summary, a poor abstract of the mighty history he had it in his heart to indite. So, instead of a return to tailoring, he clave to his 'old delectable books,' extended his researches, and in due time brought forth his *Survey of London*. Meanwhile he sank from ease and comfort into poverty, so much so that, as an old man of seventy-eight, he received from James I. letters patent authorizing him to 'collect amongst our loving subjects their voluntary contributions and kind gratuities.' This can only be described as a miserable and mean acknowledgment of long and valuable abours, and a fortune spent in the service of country. Stow died April 5th, 1605, and was buried in the church of St. Andrew Undershaft, Aldgate Ward, where a monument was erected to his memory by his widow.

Stow's *Annals*.

Base!

It requires but little consideration of the foregoing circumstances—Leland's absolute failure to accomplish his design, and Stow's half-failure in the production of a work utterly incommensurate with his hopes and desires—to arrive at one conclusion, namely, that literary enterprises on so colossal a scale would have been better undertaken by a syndicate of authors whose individual ambitions might have been slaked, and their fame assured, by the expert discharge of a tithe of the Gargantuan toil which those fathers of English

Collaboration.

history imposed on themselves. An inkling of a possible devolution seems to have occurred to Leland, who at one time professed his willingness to maintain a young man of twenty able to write Latin verses and swim in his Greek without a cork. The time, however, had come when men perceived not merely the convenience of a private secretary, but the manifest and overwhelming advantage of allocating to different scholars parts and portions of a task evidently too onerous for the shoulders of any one of them. The adoption of this principle resulted in the completion of a work to which several pens contributed.

Raphael Holinshed.

The name of Raphael Holinshed is, of course, familiar to educated persons from the use Shakespeare made of his chronicle as material for dramas; but not much is known of the chronicler's personal history. When we first make his acquaintance, it is as a publisher's hack in London. Reginald Wolfe employed him partly as a translator and partly as a coadjutor in another of those grandiose and not too sane or feasible schemes of publication, a *History and Description of the World*, adorned with maps and woodcuts. For a quarter of a century Wolfe wrestled with this Atlas of difficulty, and, when he died in 1573, three other publishers—Lucas Harrison, John Harrison, and George Bishop—stepped into his place, resolved to win some laurels. More prudent counsels, however, now prevailed, and it was decided to limit the undertaking to a *History of England, Scotland, and Ireland.* Holinshed, who was in Warwickshire as steward to Thomas Burnet, of Bramcote, was commissioned as principal writer of the chronicle, which was subsequently published under his name; but he had to assist him two very competent colleagues—Richard Stanghurst and William Harrison.

The plan included introductory descriptions of the three

countries, Harrison furnishing those of England and Scotland, and Stanghurst that of Ireland. Stanghurst, well known for his translation of Virgil, was further employed to continue Holinshed's history of Ireland (written originally for Wolfe, and based on a manuscript of Edmund Campion the Jesuit) from 1509 to 1547.

William Harrison.

The most interesting, if not the most valuable portion of the completed work, which appeared in 1577, is perhaps Harrison's 'Description of England,' a most thorough and masterly delineation of the kingdom under Tudor government, whereas his 'Description of Scotland' is of a perfunctory character, being, indeed, confessedly a translation of Bellenden's translation of Hector Boëce. Harrison should have been well equipped for his task. He was educated at Westminster School and St. Paul's, and at Oxford and Cambridge. Afterwards chaplain to William Brooke, Lord Cobham, he was presented by that nobleman to the rectory of Radwinter, in Essex. He held other preferments, and before he died in 1593, was a Canon of Windsor.

Holinshed died in 1580, but his chronicle still throve. A new edition of it, published in 1586-7, included a continuation of the history to that date; but, by way of indemnity, the abundant woodcuts, which had been a feature of the first edition, were omitted. John Stow claimed to have written the continuation, but, while it is conceded that he had probably a considerable share in providing the supplement, it is generally believed to have been the work of several hands.

A 'pamphlet' and a problem.

The only work produced during this period which betrays anything of the genuine attributes of history as an intelligent interpretation and artistic presentation of events, is a mysterious little writing to which reference has already been

made. 'The History of the Life and Death of King Edward V and the Usurpation of Richard III," was published in 1557 as the undoubted composition of Sir Thomas More by his son-in-law; and Ascham also accepted it as worthy of More's pen. He goes so far as to say that if all English histories attained to this standard, we should have no reason to fear comparison in this respect with France, Italy, or Germany.

As the 'pamphlet'—so Ascham calls it—is, without being absolutely a work of art, a creditable specimen of prose, wherein effective, but not immoderate use is made of antithesis and telling phrases are arranged in well-rounded periods, there might seem to be no reasonable ground for denying the authorship to More, especially as the work is certainly not deficient in the weightier qualities for which we should naturally look in any book fathered by the writer of *Utopia*. Tested by such evidence as the faculty of deciphering motives, of reading and depicting character, and, connected therewith, penetrating insight into the causation of events and their logical and necessary interdependence, the work again comes well out of the ordeal. It is plain that there is nothing inherently absurd in the attribution.

In the seventeenth century, however, Sir George Buck, the champion of Richard III, spoke of a book written in Latin by Cardinal Morton, and condemnatory of his hero, which had been seen by Sir John Hoby. Now it is a fact that there exists a Latin version of the history attributed to More, but it does not follow that Morton was its author, and, indeed, the hypothesis, at first so plausible, has been abandoned by the generality of scholars. The relationship between the Latin and English accounts has yet to be fixed. There is still, perhaps, an inclination to regard the English version as more or less a translation or expansion

of the Latin text; but taking all the circumstances into consideration, the difficulties appear fewer if we suppose the contrary process to have taken place, and that in those days of classical revival some scholar, not necessarily More himself, may have thought fit to turn an English into a Latin history.

It may be added that the work hardly fulfils the promise of the title, since it extends from the death of Edward IV inclusively to the coronation of Richard III, whereas it might have been expected to embrace a narrative of the usurper's reign.

Domestic Literature.

To this account of the historical writings of the age may be subjoined some allusion to what, for the want of a better name, shall be called its 'domestic literature.' Treatises on etiquette and the culinary art, on medicine and on gardening, as represented by the *Babees Book*, a pair of fifteenth-century cookery books, the *Book of Quintessence*, and *Palladius on Husbandry*, together with moral and religious works, like the English versions of the *Book of the Knight de la Tour Landry* and the *Revelation of the Monk of Evesham*, all of which have been edited for the Early English Text Society, or by Dr. Arber in his invaluable series of reprints, may be thought of as forming the intellectual stock-in-trade of the average well-regulated household. Doubtless, however, the constitution of a library varied with the taste and fortune of its possessor, for both before and after the invention of printing, a book was something of a luxury. It happens that we have an exact inventory of the volumes of an educated country gentleman of the reign of Edward IV, and they comprise the following: Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*, and two copies of the same poet's *Assembly of Fowls*; Lydgate's *Temple of Glass*; two copies of Alain Chartier's *Belle Dame Sans Merci*—poetry; *Guy, Earl of*

A Gentleman's Library.

Warwick, Guy and Colbrand, Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, The Death of King Arthur, The Lamentations of the Child Ypotis, King Richard Cœur de Lion, Palatyse and Sistacus—all romances; *The Disputation between Hope and Despair, Needs of the Mass* and a *Prayer to the Vernicle*—devotional; Cicero's *De Senectute, De Amicitia*, and *De Sapientia*—philosophical; an English verse translation of *De Regimine Principum*—political; and 'Mine old Book of Blazoning of Arms,' with more recent works on heraldry, and a copy of the new statutes of Edward IV—truly, a very sensible assortment for a knight of parts, who could not devote much time to reading. The making of the inventory shows that Paston took a keen interest in his books, of which there is further proof in the fact that he begins one of his letters with the words, 'Brother, I commend me to you, and pray you to look up my *Temple of Glass*, and send it to me by the bearer hereof.'

The *Paston Letters*.

This leads us to speak of the greatest monument of 'domestic' literature pertaining to the age—the famous collection of familiar epistles known as the *Paston Letters*, and far more worthy of attention than some of the works mentioned in the above list. The title is appropriate, because most of the letters were written by members of that flourishing stock, and all were long in the custody of their descendants.

In the reign of Charles II, an eminent Paston, raised to the peerage as Earl of Yarmouth, was still in possession of the precious missives, but on the death of his son, who succeeded to the title, but left no heir male, they passed—fortunately, one may think—to Peter le Neve, who in 1704 was appointed Norroy King of Arms. Through the marriage of Mrs. le Neve with another antiquary, Thomas Martin, of Palgrave, in Suffolk, the collection again fell

into worthy hands. On his decease a chemist and apothecary of Diss, Norfolk, one John Worth, acquired it as a speculation; and eventually it was secured by Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Fenn, of East Dereham, its first editor, who presented three bound volumes of the letter to George III.

The most curious point in the history of the Paston Letters is that, after being handed down with comparative safety from generation to generation, no sooner had many of them been printed in four volumes than the originals vanished, as did also those of the letters included in a subsequent fifth volume, of which Sir John Fenn luckily possessed transcripts. This last batch was re-discovered in 1865 by Mr. Philip Frere, grandnephew of Lady Fenn, in his house at Dungate, in Cambridgeshire; and in 1875 all but two of the originals of the letters in Fenn's third and fourth volumes, together with a very large number of others as yet unpublished, came to light at Roydon Hall, the principal seat of the Frere family. In addition, there were distinct collections of Paston Letters, formed out of the flotsam and jetsam of earlier days. Of these chance finds Francis Douce had twenty, now in the Bodleian Library; and Sir Thomas Phillips was owner of two volumes of Paston and Fastolf memoranda.

Encouraged by these ample stores of papers not hitherto printed, Mr. James Gairdner has produced an admirable edition of the Paston Letters conducted on more exact chronological principles than those of Fenn, and preceded by a very full historical introduction relating to the period covered by the correspondence—*viz.* from 1422 to 1509. We are thus enabled to gain a much truer idea of the significance of the letters from an understanding of the general conditions in which they were composed, and on which they in turn throw considerable light; and Mr.

Gairdner has followed the good example of his predecessors by annotating the individual letters. We say 'predecessors' since Charles Knight issued a not very satisfactory abridgment of Fenn's edition with a critical introduction in which he disputes many of Sir John's conclusions.

The letters having been written during the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III, and Henry VII, which is rightly regarded as one of the most critical and turbulent periods of our national history, it is peculiarly interesting to be granted a near view of the doings and sentiments of ordinary Englishmen and Englishwomen then living. On the whole the impression left with us is that the Wars of the Roses were not such a disturbing factor in their daily routine as the thought of civil war and alternate revolutions, with the consequent abiding sense of unrest and insecurity, would have led us to anticipate. The truth is these changes seem to have been relegated by the mass of the people to the Olympian region of *la haute politique*, and to have had only an occasional and transient influence on their lives and fortunes. They certainly did not retard the advance of the country on the path of material prosperity, and they allowed ample opportunities for simple and peaceable subjects to dispose of themselves and their belongings in such ways as seemed to them desirable. Still, the weakening of the central power could not be quite without effect, and we shall presently adduce an illustration of the acts of aggression which were then committed with impunity, and which would have been impossible in a properly disciplined state.

Of the general character of the letters, Sir John Fenn aptly observes: 'The artless writers here communicate their private affairs, or relate the reports of the day; they tell their tale in the plain and uncouth phrase of the time; they aim not at shining by art or eloquence, and bespeak

credit by total carelessnesss of correction and ornament.' The persons to whom most of the letters were addressed were John Paston, who died in 1466, his son, Sir John Paston, who died in 1479, and a third John Paston, who died in 1504; and the series includes epistles from Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, George Neville, Archbishop of York, John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, and William and John de la Pole, Dukes of Suffolk. One communication, which must be excepted from Fenn's estimate of the correspondence as a whole, is a paternal letter of advice from the elder Duke of Suffolk to his son, from which we should form a far more favourable opinion of his character than would be gained from the portraiture of Shakespeare and Hume. It is remarkable also that this kindlier view is apparently shared by Margaret Paston, who, in forwarding an account of the Duke's arrest and execution at sea a month later, confesses that she has 'washed the bill with sorrowful tears.' However, a man may combine estimable domestic virtues with atrocious public vices, as is proved by the classic example of Charles I, so that we are not prepared to suggest a revisal of an historical verdict merely on the evidence of the Paston Letters.

How utterly futile was the forenamed letter of advice became only too manifest fifteen years later, when Margaret Paston, as châtelaine, had to defend her manor of Heylesdon with guns and ordnance against the violent trespass of the Duke's retainers. It is true that she exculpates the Lord of Suffolk from any share in, or knowledge of, these disgraceful proceedings, but it is plausibly argued that they would scarcely have ventured on such excesses without some hint from their superior that they would not be unwelcome. The probability is that this was simply an instance of a great nobleman attempting to take the law

into his own hands—the sort of conduct that made Fortescue anxious to strengthen the royal prerogative as a safeguard against private war.

Margaret Paston, whose letters, curiously enough, are sometimes subscribed 'By your wife William Lomner' (he being her amanuensis) was a capable woman, who managed her husband's affairs when he was away from home, and kept him punctually informed of all that went forward in his absence. Her correspondence is full of those little touches, which are the essence of good letter-writing, while they afford ample proof of her masculine wisdom and spirit. In spite of that, nothing in these letters is more striking than the submissiveness of the women to their male relations. Wives understood their vow of obedience in a sense that would now be scouted and ridiculed. Here is a dutiful passage from one of Margaret Paston's epistles to her spouse, the first John Paston.

Right worshipful husband, I recommend me to you, beseeching you that you be not displeased with me, though my simpleness caused you for to be displeased with me; by my truth it is not my will neither to do nor say that should cause you for to be displeased, and if I have done (*it*), I am sorry thereof, and will amend it; wherefore I beseech you to forgive me, and that ye bear none heaviness in your heart against me, for your displeasure should be too heavy to me to endure with.

The same humble, almost abject tone is to be noted in the billets of maids to their lovers. From Topcroft Margery Brews thus writes to John Paston.

Right worshipful and well-beloved Valentine, in my most humble wise I commend me unto you, &c. And heartily I thank you for the letter that ye send me by John Bickerton, whereby I understand and know that ye be purposed to come to Topcroft, in short time, and without any errand or matter but only to

have a conclusion of the matter betwixt my father and you; I would be most glad of any creature so that the matter might grow to effect. And thereas ye say, and ye come and find the matter no more towards you than ye did aforetime, ye would no more put my father and my lady my mother to no cost nor business for that cause a good while after, which causeth my heart to be full heavy; and if that ye come, and the matter take to none effect, then should I be much more sorry and full of heaviness.

And as for myself I have done and understand in the matter that I can or may, as God knoweth; and I will let you plainly understand that my father will no more money part withal in that behalf but 100*l.* and 50 marks, which is right far from the accomplishment of your desire.

Wherefore, if that ye could be content with that good and my poor person I would be the merriest maiden; and if ye think not yourself so satisfied, or that ye might have much more good, as I have understood by you afore; (*I pray you*), good, true, and loving Valentine, that ye take no such labour upon you as to come more for that matter, but let is (*it?*) pass and never more to be spoken of, as I may be your true lover and bede-woman during my life.

No more unto you at this time, but Almighty Jesu preserve you both body and Soul, &c.

By your Valentine,
MARGERY BREWS.

The mercenary spirit invaded also the relations between guardian and ward. 'He bought and sold me like a beast,' said Stephen Scrope of Sir John Fastolf, a kinsman of Margaret Paston, who had a fondness for fair manors. The historical Fastolf has not much in common with Shakespeare's obese and joyous knight, whose name, but for a false imputation in Monstrelet on Sir John's courage at the battle of Patay, would have been Oldcastle. The truth is that in this engagement, which went ill for the English, Fastolf exhibited heroic valour, and this may

be considered to redeem in some measure his less attractive qualities—his avarice and hard-heartedness. Still, it is curious that, when he was nearly eighty years of age, he addressed to John Paston a letter which seems to show that he had gained, during his lifetime, the reputation of a gascon, and was prepared to go a considerable length in resenting the insults of some gentlemen at Norwich, uttered behind his back. Incorrigible boasting, then, is one element in the character of Prince Hal's boon companion, which it is more than likely Shakespeare had received from tradition.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

1401. Rebellion in Wales. Statute *de hacretico comburendo*.
1402. Welsh defeated; death of Hotspur at Shrewsbury.
1405. The youthful King James I (of Scotland) captured at sea, and imprisoned in the Tower.
1413. Death of Henry IV; accession of Henry V.
1415. Battle of Agincourt.
1422. Death of Henry V; Henry VI (aged nine months) proclaimed king.
1424. Ransom and return of James I of Scotland.
1428. Siege of Orléans.
1429. Orléans relieved by Joan of Arc.
1431. Coronation of Henry VI at Paris. Joan of Arc burnt at Rouen.
1435. European congress at Arras with a view to a general peace.
1437. Assassination of James I of Scotland.
1440. Foundation of Eton College by Henry VI.
1441. Foundation of King's College, Cambridge, by Henry VI.
1445. Marriage of Henry VI to Margaret of Anjou.
1447. Death (murder?) of Humphry, Duke of Gloucester.
1450. Printed Bible at Maintz.
1453. Capture of Constantinople by the Turks. End of the Hundred Years' War.
1455. First Battle of St. Albans; Henry VI defeated and taken prisoner by Richard of York.
1458. Capture of Athens by the Turks.
1460. Henry VI defeated and taken prisoner at Northampton (July). Battle of Wakefield (December); Richard of York defeated by Margaret of Anjou, and beheaded.

1461. Second Battle of St. Albans; defeat of the Yorkists. Entry of Edward IV into London, where he is crowned at Westminster Abbey (March). Victory of the Yorkist party at Towton.

1464. Battles of Hedgeley Moor and Hexham, won by the Yorkists.

1465. Capture of Henry VI, and his imprisonment in the Tower.

1466. Marriage of Edward IV to Elizabeth Woodville, the beautiful widow of Sir John Grey.

1470. Restoration of Henry VI by Warwick.

1471. Battle of Barnet; Warwick defeated and slain by Edward IV (April). Landing of Margaret of Anjou, who is defeated and taken prisoner by Edward IV at Tewkesbury (May). Henry VI assassinated in the Tower (May).

1476. Caxton erects printing-presses at Westminster.

1477. Caxton prints *Dictes and Sayings*, his first book printed in England.

1478. Execution of the Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV.

1483. Death of Edward IV. Richard III becomes king, on the death of the children of Edward IV in the Tower.

1485. Defeat of Richard by Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, at Bosworth (August 11).

1486. Henry VII marries Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, thus effecting the union of the Roses.

1492. Perkin Warbeck's rebellion (executed in 1498). First voyage of Columbus.

1497. Vasco da Gama rounds the Cape; the Cabots sail in search of the North-West Passage; first voyage (?) of Amerigo Vespucci.

1499. Erasmus at Oxford.

1503. Marriage of James IV of Scotland to Margaret, daughter of Henry VI.

1505. Foundation of Christ's College, Cambridge. Patent granted by Henry VII to the Merchant Adventurers.

1509. Accession of Henry VIII (April); his marriage to Catherine of Aragon (June).

1513. Battle of Flodden; death of James IV; accession of James V.
1515. Cardinal Wolsey, Lord High Chancellor.
1520. Field of the Cloth of Gold; alliance between Henry VIII and Charles V. Luther condemned by a Papal Bull.
1521. Luther begins his translation of the Bible (finished in 1534).
1525. Tyndal's translation of the New Testament.
1526. Hans Holbein in England.
1529. Fall of Wolsey. Sir Thomas More Chancellor. Siege of Vienna by Solyman II.
1530. Confession of Augsburg.
1532. Fall of More. Machiavelli's *Principe* (written in 1512) published.
1533. Henry VIII marries Anne Boleyn. Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury. Elizabeth born, September 7.
1534. Act of Supremacy.
1535. Thomas Cromwell Vicar-General. Execution of Sir Thomas More. Coverdale's Bible.
1536. Execution of Anne Boleyn, May 19. Henry marries Jane Seymour, May 20. Suppression of the monasteries. Catholic risings.
1537. Birth of Edward VI; death of Jane Seymour.
1538. Marriage of James V of Scotland and Mary of Lorraine.
1539. The Six Articles.
1540. Marriage of Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves, January 6; annulled (July). Henry marries Catherine Howard (July).
1542. Execution of Catherine Howard. Defeat of James V of Scotland at Solway Moss. Birth of Mary Stuart.
1543. Henry VIII marries Catherine Parr.
1545. Opening of the Council of Trent.
1546. Death of Luther (February). Assassination of Cardinal Beaton.
1547. Death of Henry VIII (28 January). The Protector Somerset routs the Scots at Pinkie.
1549. First Act of Uniformity. Execution of Thomas Seymour, brother of the Protector.

1552. Execution of Somerset.
1553. Death of Edward VI. Restoration of the Roman Catholic religion by Mary.
1554. Wyatt's rebellion. Lady Jane Grey beheaded. Marriage of Queen Mary and Philip II of Spain.
1555. Ridley and Latimer burnt.
1556. Cranmer burnt.
1558. The Dauphin marries Mary Stuart. Death of Mary, Queen of England, and accession of Elizabeth. Sir William Cecil (afterwards Lord Burghley) appointed Secretary of State—an office in which he was retained till his death (1598).
1559. Coronation of Elizabeth. Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. Parker becomes Archbishop of Canterbury. Accession of Francis II of France, Mary Stuart's husband.
1560. Death of Francis.
1561. Return of Mary Stuart to Scotland.
1563. The plague decimates London. First Poor Law of Elizabeth's reign.
1565. Parker's regulations of public worship. Revolt of Ulster.
1566. Birth of James I and VI.
1567. Assassination of Darnley. Marriage of Mary Stuart to Bothwell.
1568. Mary Stuart takes refuge in England, where she is imprisoned. Constant immigration of foreign Protestants, principally artisans. English Roman Catholics establish a college at Douay. The Bishops' Bible.
1569. Assassination of the Regent Murray. Excommunication of Elizabeth.
1571. Battle of Lepanto. Enforcement of the Thirty-Nine Articles.
1572. Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Death of Knox.
1575. Completion of *Jerusalem Delivered* by Tasso.
1576. Frobisher commences his voyages.
1577. Drake sets out on his voyage round the world (returns 1580).
1578. Sir Humphry Gilbert receives a patent for the colonization of America.

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